THE
BHAGAVAD-GITA

WITH

NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

GITA YOGA

THEOSOPHICAL GLOSSARY

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THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

BY

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

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BY

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

ROBERT CROSBIE

RAGHAVAN IYER

H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHY TRUST BOOKS
NORFOLK, VA

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to all who seek that supernal light of the Divine that shines in the depths of their own hearts.

All human beings, every day of their lives, are involved unconsciously in the quest for wisdom. When they become postulants or neophytes, they are put on a preliminary probation and can be received as disciples only after they have completed preliminary qualifications. All of these involve a reorientation of their basic outlook in relation to who they are, why they were born, their attitude to the moment of death, where they are going, the meaning of every relationship, and above all whether they are ready to pledge themselves irreversibly towards that which they find irresistible – the great thrill that accompanies the light of daring lit up in the heart, the thrill of compassionate service to the whole of suffering humanity.

Raghavan Iyer
Concord House, November 1985

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Editor's Preface

"A mighty spirit moves through the pages of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* It has the seductive influence of beauty; yet, like strength, it fills one as with the sound of armies assembling or the roar of great waters. Appealing alike to the warrior and the philosopher, it shows to the one the righteousness of lawful action, and to the other the calmness which results to him who has reached inaction through action." So wrote William Q. Judge in the opening remarks to his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, the second book included in this volume. These words of Mr. Judge remind us of the fundamental importance of learning one of the most basic lessons of human life: how to perform our actions so that we are not further bound by the bonds of karma, and therefore become capable – over time – of acting for the sake of all beings. This teaching goes to the heart of the human predicament: what is the most basic lesson for human beings to learn is also the most difficult. Addressing as it does this issue, it is no wonder that the *Gita* should be one of the most widely studied and published works ever written.

Today, there are dozens of renditions of the *Gita* – ranging from superb to useful – available to the student of the Wisdom Religion; Amazon.com shows 20 webpages at least of various translations, renditions, and interpretations, among them a *Bhagavad-Gita For Beginners*, a *Bhagavad-Gita For Children*, even a *Bhagavad-Gita for Dummies* and a *Bhagavad-Gita* board game (the Mahabharatan War game). Given this saturation of *Gita* books in the marketplace, why yet another entry into a crowded field?

The answer is simply because the three works incorporated into this Theosophy Trust volume – Mr. Judge's *The Bhagavad-Gita*, his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, and a superb essay on the *Gita* entitled *Gītā Yoga* by Sri Raghavan Iyer – form a unique and powerful guide both for Beginners, Children, Dummies, and for all students of the spiritual life whose deepest concern in life is walking the Path to wisdom. This book, in short, meets a real need among all these aspirants to spiritual knowledge.

The notion that there is such a Path to wisdom – that it is real, that it is ancient and constant and somewhat esoteric, but that it may be found by anyone who exercises their heart-light and their rational faculties – has gained much currency in this 21st Century. This was not always so. Such an idea would have been widely ridiculed 150 years ago by the *bourgeoisie* in Victorian England and in late 19th Century America, and would no doubt still be such an object of ridicule but for the heroic work of H.P. Blavatsky, Mr. Judge and Crosbie, and many other workers and writers in the fields of Theosophy. The reality and sacredness of the Path has now become an object of contemplation and aspiration for millions of people in the West as well as in the modern East, where the idea originated but also, alas, where it had been largely forgotten by the modern educated.

There are perhaps 6 or so other instances of Mr. Judge's rendition of the *Bhagavad-Gita* extant, but in none of them will you find Prof. Iyer's superb work, *Gītā Yoga*, one of the finest essays ever written on the *Gita*. This essay in *buddhiyoga* points to the ever-maturing bonds in the sacred relationship between the teaching of the *Gita*, the aspirant, and the *guru*, both within and without, and will be an invaluable treasure to which the student will frequently return over a lifetime of devotion to the quest for spiritual knowledge.

"Any person who seeks the supernal radiance of the Invisible Sun, the ceaseless vibration of the *Logos* ensouling the unbroken lineage of the Fraternity of Enlightened Seers, must abide at all times with heart fixed upon the object of his devotion. He must be worthy of that total devotion, continually practising meditation, returning his mind whenever possible to its favourite subject of contemplation, the *Logos* that is the noumenal force behind the whole of life. Only then can he truly say that he has found the Krishna-Christos within himself."

Editor, Theosophy Trust
March 10, 2017

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

THE BOOK OF DEVOTION

DIALOGUE BETWEEN KRISHNA,
LORD OF DEVOTION,
AND ARJUNA,
PRINCE OF INDIA

From the Sanscrit

By WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

THEOSOPHY TRUST BOOKS
NORFOLK, VA

ANTECEDENT WORDS

THE *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* is an episode of the *Mahâbhârata*, which is said to have been written by Vyasa. Who this Vyasa is and when he lived is not known.

J. Cockburn Thomson, in his translation of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, says: "The *Mahâbhârata*, as all students of Sanskrit well know, is the great epic of India, which from its popularity and extent would seem to correspond with the *Iliad* among the Greeks. The theme of the whole work is a certain war which was carried on between two branches of one tribe, the descendants of Kuru, for the sovereignty of Hâstinapura, commonly supposed to be the same as the modern Delhi. The elder branch is called by the general name of the whole tribe, Kurus; the younger goes by the patronymic, from Pandu, the father of the five principal leaders.

"This war between the Kurus and Pandavas occupies about twenty thousand *slokas*, or a quarter of the whole work as we now possess it.... In order to understand the allusions there [in the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*] a knowledge is requisite of the previous history of the tribe, which will now be given as follows:

"Of the name Kuru we know but little, but that little is sufficient to prove that it is one of great importance. We have no means of deriving it from any Sanskrit root, nor has it, like too many of the Hindû names, the appearance of being explanatory of the peculiarities of the person or persons whom it designates. It is therefore in all probability a name of considerable antiquity, brought by the Aryan race from their first seat in Central Asia. Its use in Sanskrit is fourfold. It is the name of the northern quarter or Dwipa of the world, and is described as lying between the most northern range of snowy mountains and the polar sea. It is further the name of the most northern of the nine varshas of the known world. Among the long genealogies of the tribe itself it is known as the name of an ancient king to whom the foundation of the tribe is attributed. Lastly, it designates an Aryan tribe of sufficient importance to disturb the whole of northern India with its factions, and to make its battles the theme of the longest epic of olden time.

"Viewing these facts together we should be inclined to draw the conclusion that the name was originally that of a race inhabiting Central Asia beyond the Himalaya, who emigrated with other races into the northwest of the peninsula and with them formed the great people who styled themselves unitedly Arya, or the noble, to distinguish them from the aborigines whom they subdued and on whose territories they eventually settled . . . .

"At the time when the plot of the *Mahâbhârata* was enacted this tribe was situated in the plain of the Doab, and their particular region lying between the Jumna and Sursooty rivers, was called Kurukshetra, or the plain of the Kurus. The capital of this country was Hâstinapura, and here reigned at a period of which we cannot give the exact date a king named Vichitravirya. He was the son of Shantanu and Satyavati; and Bhîshma and Krishna Dwaipayana, the Vyasa, were his half-brothers; the former being his father's, the latter his mother's son. He married two sisters – Amba and Ambalika – but dying shortly after marriage, he left no progeny; and his half-brother, the Vyasa, instigated by divine compassion, married his widow and begat two sons, Dhritarâshtra and Pandu. The former had one hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Duryodhana. The latter married firstly Prîtha, or Kuntî, the daughter of Shura, and secondly Madri. The children of these wives were the five Pandava princes; but as their mortal father, while hunting, had been cursed by a deer to be childless all his life, these children were mystically begotten by different deities. Thus Yudhishthira, Bhîma, and Arjuna were the sons of Prîtha by Dharma, Vayu, and Indra respectively. Nakula was the son of Madri by Nasatya the elder, and Sahadeva by Darsa the younger of the twin Ashwinau, the physicians of the gods. This story would seem to be a fiction invented to give a divine origin to the five heroes of the poem; but however that may be, Duryodhana and his brothers are the leaders of the Kuru, or elder branch of the tribe; and the five Pandava princes those of the Pandava or younger branch.

"Dhritarâshtra was blind, but, although thus incapacitated for governing, he retained the throne, while his son Duryodhana really directed he affairs of the state. . . . he prevailed on his father to banish his cousins, the Pandava princes, from the country. After long wanderings and varied hardships, these princes collected their friends

around them, formed by the help of many neighboring kings a vast army, and prepared to attack their unjust oppressor, who had in like manner assembled his forces.

"The hostile armies meet on the plain of the Kurus. Bhîshma, the half-brother of Vichitravirya, being the oldest warrior among them, has command of the Kuru faction; Bhîma, the second son of Pandu, noted for his strength and prowess, is the general of the other party [Arjuna's]. The scene of our poem now opens and remains throughout the same – the field of battle. In order to introduce to the reader the names of the principal chieftains in each army, Duryodhana is made to approach Drôna, his military preceptor, and name them one by one. The challenge is then suddenly given by Bhîshma, the Kuru general, by blowing his conch; and he is seconded by all his followers. It is returned by Arjuna, who is in the same chariot with the god Krishna, who, in compassion for the persecution he had suffered, had become his intimate friend, and was acting the part of a charioteer to him. He is followed by all the generals of the Pandavas. The fight then begins with a volley of arrows from both sides; but when Arjuna perceives it he begs Krishna to draw up the chariot in the space between the two armies while he examines the lines of the enemy. The god does so and points out in those lines the numerous relatives of his friend. Arjuna is horror-struck at the idea of committing fratricide by slaying his near relations, and throws down his bow and arrows, declaring that he would rather be killed without defending himself than fight against them. Krishna replies with the arguments which form the didactic and philosophical doctrines of the work, and endeavors to persuade him that he mistakes in forming such a resolution. Arjuna is eventually overruled. The fight goes on, and the Pandavas defeat their opponents."

This quotation from Thomson's edition gives the student a brief statement of what is more or less mythological and allegorical, but if the story of the *Mahâbhârata* be taken as that of Man in his evolutionary development, as I think it ought to be, the whole can be raised from the plane of fable, and the student will then have before him an account, to some extent, of that evolution.

Thus looking at it from the Theosophical point of view, the king Dhritarâshtra, is the human body which is acquired by the immortal

Monad in order to go through the evolutionary journey; the mortal envelope is brought into existence by means of Tanha, or thirst for life. He is blind because the body without the faculties within is merely senseless matter, and thus is "incapacitated for governing," and some other person is represented in the *Mahâbhârata* as being the governor of the state, the nominal king being the body – Dhritarâshtra. As the Theosophical scheme holds that there is a double line of evolution within us, we find that the Kurus spoken of in the poem represent the more material side of those two lines, and the Pandava princes, of whom Arjuna is one, stand for the spiritual side of the stream – that is, Arjuna represents the immortal Spark.

The learned Brahmin Theosophist, Subba Row, says in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gîtâ (Vide The Theosophist*, Vol. VIII, p. 299): "Krishna was intended to represent the *Logos* . . . and Arjuna, who was called Nara, was intended to represent the human monad." Nara also means Man. The alleged celestial origin for the two branches of the family, the Kurus and Pandavas, is in perfect consonance with this, for the body, or Dhritarâshtra, being solely material and the lower plane in which the development takes place, the Kurus and Pandavas are our inheritance from the celestial beings often referred to in Mme. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*, the one tending towards materiality, the other being spiritual. The Kurus, then, the lower portion of our nature earliest developed, obtain the power on this plane for the time being, and one of them, Duryodhana, "prevails," so that the Pandavas, or the more spiritual parts of our nature, are banished temporarily from the country, that is, from governing Man. "The long wanderings and varied hardships" of the Pandavas are wanderings caused by the necessities of evolution before these better parts are able to make a stand for the purpose of gaining the control in Man's evolutionary struggle. This also has reference to the cyclic rise and fall of nations and the race.

The hostile armies, then, who meet on the plain of the Kurus are these two collections of the human faculties and powers, those on one side tending to drag us down, those on the other aspiring towards spiritual illumination. The battle refers not only to the great warfare that mankind as a whole carries on, but also to the struggle which is inevitable as soon as any one unit in the human family resolves to

allow his higher nature to govern him in his life. Hence, bearing in mind the suggestion made by Subba Row, we see that Arjuna, called Nara, represents not only Man as a race, but also any individual who resolves upon the task of developing his better nature. What is described as happening in the poem to him will come to every such individual. Opposition from friends and from all the habits he has acquired, and also that which naturally arises from hereditary tendencies, will confront him, and then it will depend upon how he listens to Krishna, who is the *Logos* shining within and speaking within, whether he will succeed or fail.

With these suggestions the student will find that the mythology and allegory spoken of by Thomson and others are useful instead of being merely ornamental, or, as some think, superfluous and misleading.

The only cheap edition of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* hitherto within the reach of Theosophical students of limited means has been one which was published in Bombay by Brother Tookeram Tatya, F. T. S., whose efforts in that direction are entitled to the highest praise. But that one was simply a reprint of the first English translation made one hundred years ago by Wilkins. The great attention of late bestowed on the poem by nearly all members of the Theosophical Society in America has created an imperative demand for an edition which shall be at least free from some of the glaring typographical mistakes and blind renderings so frequent in the Wilkins reprint. To meet this demand the present has been made up. It is the result of a careful comparison of all the English editions and of a complete retranslation from the original wherever any obscurity or omission was evident in the various renderings consulted.

The making of a commentary has not been essayed, because it is believed that the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* should stand on its own merits without comments, each student being left to himself to see deeper as he advances. The publisher of this edition holds that the poem can be read in many different ways, each depending on the view-point taken, *e. g.*, whether it is considered in its application to the individual, or to cosmogenesis, or to the evolution of the Astral world, or the Hierarchies in Nature, or to the moral nature, and so on. To attach a commentary, except such an one as only a sage like Sankaracharya

could write, would be audacious, and therefore the poem is given undisfigured.

The *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* tends to impress upon the individual two things: first, selflessness, and second, action: the studying of and living by it will arouse the belief that there is but one Spirit and not several; that we cannot live for ourselves alone, but must come to realize that there is no such thing as separateness, and no possibility of escaping from the collective Karma of the race to which one belongs, and then, that we must think and act in accordance with such belief.

The poem is held in the highest esteem by all sects in Hindustan except the Mahommedan and Christian. It has been translated into many languages, both Asiatic and European: it is being read to-day by hundreds of sincere Theosophists in every part of the world. To those and to all others who truly love their fellowmen, and who aspire to learn and teach the science of devotion, this edition of the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ* is offered.

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE
New York, October, 1890

"I established this whole Universe with a
single portion of myself, and remain separate."

Tenth Chapter.

THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

The Book of Devotion

CHAPTER I
THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

OM!

DHRITARASHTRA:

Tell me, O Sanjaya, what the people of my own party and those of Pandu, who are assembled at Kurukshetra resolved upon war have been doing.[1]

SANJAYA:

King Duryodhana, having just beheld the army of the Pandus drawn up in battle array, went to his preceptor and spoke these words:

"Behold! O Master, the mighty army of the sons of Pandu drawn up by thy pupil, the clever son of Drupada. In it are warriors with great bows, equal to Bhîma and Arjuna in battle, namely, Yuyudhâna, and

---

[1] The key for reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* is to be applied to this first verse. If we look at the poem in its application to a man aspiring to devotion, then the battlefield is the body acquired by *Karma* and *Tanha*, thirst for life, while the speaker and his party represent the lower self, and the Pandus the Higher Self. But if this and succeeding chapters are regarded from the cosmic standpoint, then the speaker, the plain of Kuru, the generals described in the first chapter, together with their instruments and weapons, are beings, forces, planes, and planets in the universe, of which it would be out of place to treat here. As applied to ourselves, the poem is of greater interest and importance: it opens with the battle inevitable between the higher and lower natures of man, and then, from this viewpoint, Krishna – who is the Higher Self, – in order to encourage Arjuna, becomes his instructor in philosophy and right ethics, so that he may be fit to fight and conquer.

Virâta, and Drupada on his great car; Dhrishtaketu, Chekitâna, and the valiant king of Kashî, and Purujit, and Kuntibhoja, with Shaivya, chief of men; Yudhâmanyu the strong, and Uttamauja the brave; the son of Subhadrâ, and all the sons of Draupadi, too, in their huge chariots. Be acquainted also with the names of those in our party who are most distinguished. I will mention a few of those who are amongst my generals, by way of example. There is thyself, my Preceptor, and Bhîshma, Karna, and Kripa, the conqueror in battle, and Aswatthama, and Vikarna, and the son of Soma-datta, with others in vast numbers, who for my service risk their life. They are all of them practiced in the use of arms, armed with divers weapons, and experienced in every mode of fight. This army of ours, which is commanded by Bhîshma, is not sufficient, while their forces, led by Bhîma, are sufficient. Let all the generals, according to their respective divisions, stand at their posts, and one and all resolve Bhîshma to support."

The ancient chief, brother of the grandsire of the Kurus, then, to raise the spirits of the Kuru chief, blew his shell, sounding like the lion's roar; and instantly innumerable shells and other warlike instruments were sounded on all sides, so that the clangor was excessive. At this time Krishna and Arjuna, standing in a splendid chariot drawn by white horses, also sounded their shells, which were of celestial form: the name of the one which Krishna blew was Pânchajanya, and that of Arjuna was called Deva-datta – "the gift of the Gods." Bhîma, of terrific power, blew his capacious shell, Paundra; and Yudhishthira, the royal son of Kuntî, sounded Ananta-Vijaya; Nakula and Sahadeva blew their shells also, the one called Sughosha, the other Manipushpaka. The prince of Kashî, of the mighty bow; Sikhandï, Dhrishtadyumna. Viràta, Sâtyaki, of invincible arm; Drupada and the sons of his royal daughter; Krishna, with the son Subhadrà, and all the other chiefs and nobles, blew also their respective shells, so that their shrill-sounding voices pierced the hearts of the Kurus and reëchoed with a dreadful noise from heaven to earth.

Then Arjuna whose crest was Hanuman, perceiving that the sons of Dhritarâshtra stood ready to begin the fight, and that the flying of arrows had commenced, having raised his bow, addressed these words to Krishna.

ARJUNA:

"I pray thee, Krishna, cause my chariot to be placed between the two armies, that I may behold who are the men that stand ready, anxious to commence the battle: with whom it is I am to fight in this ready field; and who they are that are here assembled to support the evil minded son of Dhritarâshtra in the battle."

SANJAYA:

Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna, drove the chariot, and, having caused it to halt in the space between the two armies, bade Arjuna cast his eyes towards the ranks of the Kurus, and behold where stood the aged Bhîshma, and Drôna, with all the chief nobles of their party. Standing there Arjuna surveyed both the armies, and beheld, on either side, grandsires, uncles, cousins, tutors, sons, and brothers, near relations, or bosom friends; and when he had gazed for a while and beheld all his kith and kin drawn up in battle array, he was moved by extreme pity, and, filled with despondency, he thus in sadness spoke:

ARJUNA:

"Now, O Krishna, that I have beheld my kindred thus standing anxious for the fight, my members fail me, my countenance withereth, the hair standeth on end upon my body, and all my frame trembleth with horror! Even Gandiva, my bow, slips from my hand, and my skin is parched and dried up. I am not able to stand; for my mind, as it were, whirleth round, and I behold on all sides adverse omens. When I shall have destroyed my kindred, shall I longer look for happiness? I wish not for victory, Krishna; I want not pleasure; for what are dominion and the enjoyments of life, or even life itself, when those for whom dominion, pleasure, and enjoyment were to be coveted have abandoned life and fortune, and stand here in the field ready for the battle? Tutors, sons and fathers, grandsires and grandsons, uncles and nephews, cousins, kindred, and friends! Although they would kill me, I wish not to fight them: no, not even for the dominion of the three regions of the universe, much less for this little earth! Having killed the sons of Dhritarâshtra, what pleasure, O thou who art prayed to by mortals, can we enjoy? Would we destroy them, tyrants though they are, sin would take refuge with us. It therefore behooveth us not to kill

such near relations as these. How, O Krishna, can we be happy hereafter, when we have been the murderers of our race? What if they, whose minds are depraved by the lust of power, see no sin in the extirpation of their race, no crime in the murder of their friends, is that a reason why we should not resolve to turn away from such a crime – we who abhor the sin of extirpating our own kindred? On the destruction of a tribe the ancient virtue of the tribe and family is lost; with the loss of virtue, vice and impiety overwhelm the whole of a race. From the influence of impiety the females of a family grow vicious; and from women that are become vicious are born the spurious caste called Varna Sankar. Corruption of caste is a gate of hell, both for these destroyers of a tribe and for those who survive; and their forefathers, being deprived of the ceremonies of cakes and water offered to their manes, sink into the infernal regions. By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe and by those who cause confusion of caste, the family virtue and the virtue of a whole tribe are forever done away with; and we have read in sacred writ, O Krishna, that a sojourn in hell awaits those mortals whose generation hath lost its virtue. Woe is me! What a great crime are we prepared to commit! Alas! that from the desire for sovereignty and pleasure we stand here ready to slay our own kin! I would rather patiently suffer that the sons of Dhritarâshtra, with their weapons in their hands, should come upon me, and unopposed, kill me unresisting in the field."

SANJAYA:

When Arjuna had ceased to speak, he sat down in the chariot between the two armies; and, having put away his bow and arrows, his heart was overwhelmed with despondency.

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the First Chapter, by name –

THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA.

CHAPTER II
DEVOTION THROUGH APPLICATION TO THE SPECULATIVE DOCTRINES

SANJAYA:

KRISHNA, beholding him thus influenced by compunction, his eyes overflowing with a flood of tears, and his heart oppressed with deep affliction, addressed him in the following words:

KRISHNA:

"Whence, O Arjuna, cometh upon thee this dejection in matters of difficulty, so unworthy of the honorable, and leading neither to heaven nor to glory? It is disgraceful, contrary to duty, and the foundation of dishonor. Yield not thus to unmanliness, for it ill-becometh one like thee. Abandon, O tormentor of thy foes, this despicable weakness of thy heart and stand up."

ARJUNA:

"How, O slayer of Madhu, shall I with my shafts contend in battle against such as Bhîshma and Drôna, who of all men are most worthy of my respect? For it were better to beg my bread about the world than be the murderer of my preceptors, to whom such awful reverence is due. Were I to destroy such friends as these, I should partake of possessions, wealth, and pleasures polluted with their blood. Nor can we tell whether it would be better that we should defeat them, or they us. For those drawn up, angrily confronting us – and after whose death, should they perish by my hand, I would not wish to live – are the sons and people of Dhritarâshtra. As I am of a disposition which is affected by compassion and the fear of doing wrong, I ask thee which is it better to do? Tell me that distinctly! I am thy disciple; wherefore instruct in my duty me who am under thy tuition; for my understanding is confounded by the dictates of my duty, and I see nothing that may assuage the grief which drieth up my faculties,

although I were to obtain a kingdom without a rival upon earth, or dominion over the hosts of heaven."

SANJAYA:

Arjuna having thus spoken to Krishna, became silent, saying: "I shall not fight, O Govinda." Krishna, tenderly smiling, addressed these words to the prince thus standing downcast between the two armies:

KRISHNA:

"Thou grievest for those that may not be lamented, whilst thy sentiments are those of the expounders of the letter of the law. Those who are wise in spiritual things grieve neither for the dead nor for the living. I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. One who is confirmed in this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass. The senses, moving toward their appropriate objects, are producers of heat and cold, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are brief and changeable; these do thou endure, O son of Bharata! For the wise man, whom these disturb not and to whom pain and pleasure are the same, is fitted for immortality. There is no existence for that which does not exist, nor is there any non-existence for what exists. By those who see the truth and look into the principles of things, the ultimate characteristic of these both is seen. Learn that He by whom all things were formed is incorruptible, and that no one is able to effect the destruction of IT which is inexhaustible. These finite bodies, which envelope the souls inhabiting them, are said to belong to Him, the eternal, the indestructible, unprovable Spirit, who is in the body: wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve to fight. The man who believeth that it is this Spirit which killeth, and he who thinketh that it may be destroyed, are both alike deceived; for it neither killeth nor is it killed. It is not a thing of which a man may say, 'It hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter'; for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed. How can the man who believeth that it is incorruptible, eternal, inexhaustible, and without birth, think that it can either kill or

cause to be killed? As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it not, the wind drieth it not away; for it is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible, and is not to be dried away: it is eternal, universal, permanent, immovable; it is invisible, inconceivable, and unalterable; therefore, knowing it to be thus, thou shouldst not grieve. But whether thou believest it to be of eternal birth and duration, or that it dieth with the body, still thou hast no cause to lament it. Death is certain to all things which are born, and rebirth to all mortals; wherefore it doth not behoove thee to grieve about the inevitable. The antenatal state of beings is unknown; the middle state is evident; and their state after death is not to be discovered. What in this is there to lament? Some regard the indwelling spirit as a wonder, whilst some speak and others hear of it with astonishment; but no one realizes it, although he may have heard it described. This spirit can never be destroyed in the mortal frame which it inhabiteth, hence it is unworthy for thee to be troubled for all these mortals. Cast but thine eyes towards the duties of thy particular tribe, and it will ill become thee to tremble. A soldier of the Kshatriya[2] tribe hath no duty superior to lawful war, and just to thy wish the door of heaven is found open before thee, through this glorious unsought fight which only fortune's favored soldiers may obtain. But if thou wilt not perform the duty of thy calling and fight out the field, thou wilt abandon thy natural duty and thy honor, and be guilty of a crime. Mankind will speak of thy ill fame as infinite, and for one who hath been respected in the world ill fame is worse than death. The generals of the armies will think that thy retirement from the field arose from fear, and even amongst those by whom thou wert wont to be thought great of soul thou shalt become despicable. Thine enemies will speak of thee in words which are unworthy to be spoken, depreciating thy courage and abilities; what can be more dreadful than this! If thou art slain thou shalt attain heaven; if victorious, the world shall be thy reward; wherefore, son of Kuntî, arise with determination fixed for the battle. Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the

[2] Kshatriya is the second or military caste of India.

same to thee, and then prepare for battle, for thus and thus alone shalt thou in action still be free from sin.

"Thus before thee has been set the opinion in accordence with the Sankhya doctrine, speculatively; now hear what it is in the practical, devotional one, by means of which, if fully imbued therewith, thou shalt forever burst the bonds of Karma and rise above them. In this system of *Yoga* no effort is wasted, nor are there any evil consequences, and even a little of this practice delivereth a man from great risk. In this path there is only one single object, and this of a steady, constant nature; but widely-branched is the faith and infinite are the objects of those who follow not this system.

"The unwise, delighting in the controversies of the *Vedas*, tainted with worldly lusts, and preferring a transient enjoyment of heaven to eternal absorption, whilst they declare there is no other reward, pronounce, for the attainment of worldly riches and enjoyments, flowery sentences which promise rewards in future births for present action, ordaining also many special ceremonies the fruit of which is merit leading to power and objects of enjoyment. But those who thus desire riches and enjoyment have no certainty of soul and least hold on meditation. The subject of the *Vedas* is the assemblage of the three qualities. Be thou free from these qualities, O Arjuna! Be free from the 'pairs of opposites' and constant in the quality of *Sattva*, free from worldly anxiety and the desire to preserve present possessions, self-centered and uncontrolled by objects of mind or sense. As many benefits as there are in a tank stretching free on all sides, so many are there for a truth-realizing Brahman in all the Vedic rites.

"Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event. Do not be incited to actions by the hope of their reward, nor let thy life be spent in inaction. Firmly persisting in *Yoga*, perform thy duty, O Dhananjaya,[3] and laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action, make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure. Equal-mindedness is called *Yoga*.

"Yet the performance of works is by far inferior to mental devotion, O despiser of wealth. Seek an asylum, then, in this mental devotion,

[3] Dhananjaya – despiser of wealth.

which is knowledge; for the miserable and unhappy are those whose impulse to action is found in its reward. But he who by means of *yoga* is mentally devoted dismisses alike successful and unsuccessful results, being beyond them; *Yoga* is skill in the performance of actions: therefore do thou aspire to this devotion. For those who are thus united to knowledge and devoted, who have renounced all reward for their actions, meet no rebirth in this life, and go to that eternal blissful abode which is free from all disease and untouched by troubles.

"When thy heart shall have worked through the snares of delusion, then thou wilt attain to high indifference as to those doctrines which are already taught or which are yet to be taught. When thy mind once liberated from the *Vedas* shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shalt thou attain to devotion."

ARJUNA:

"What, O Keshava,[4] is the description of that wise and devoted man who is fixed in contemplation and confirmed in spiritual knowledge? What may such a sage declare? Where may he dwell? Does he move and act like other men?"

KRISHNA:

"A man is said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge when he forsaketh every desire which entereth into his heart, and of himself is happy and content in the Self through the Self. His mind is undisturbed in adversity; he is happy and contented in prosperity, and he is a stranger to anxiety, fear, and anger. Such a man is called a Muni.[5] When in every condition he receives each event, whether favorable or unfavorable, with an equal mind which neither likes nor dislikes, his wisdom is established, and, having met good or evil, neither rejoiceth at the one nor is cast down by the other. He is confirmed in spiritual knowledge, when, like the tortoise, he can draw in all his senses and restrain them from their wonted purposes. The hungry man loseth sight of every other object but the gratification of

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[4] Keshava – he whose rays manifest themselves as omniscience – a name of Krishna.

[5] Muni – a wise man.

his appetite, and when he is become acquainted with the Supreme, he loseth all taste for objects of whatever kind. The tumultuous senses and organs hurry away by force the heart even of the wise man who striveth after perfection. Let a man, restraining all these, remain in devotion at rest in me, his true self; for he who hath his senses and organs in control possesses spiritual knowledge.

"He who attendeth to the inclinations of the senses, in them hath a concern; from this concern is created passion, from passion anger, from anger is produced delusion, from delusion a loss of the memory, from the loss of memory loss of discrimination, and from loss of discrimination loss of all! But he who, free from attachment or repulsion for objects, experienceth them through the senses and organs, with his heart obedient to his will, attains to tranquility of thought. And this tranquil state attained, therefrom shall soon result a separation from all troubles; and his mind being thus at ease, fixed upon one object, it embraceth wisdom from all sides. The man whose heart and mind are not at rest is without wisdom or the power of contemplation; who doth not practice reflection, hath no calm; and how can a man without calm obtain happiness? The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean. Therefore, O great armed one, he is possessed of spiritual knowledge whose senses are withheld from objects of sense. What is night to those who are unenlightened is as day to his gaze; what seems as day is known to him as night, the night of ignorance. Such is the self-governed Sage!

"The man whose desires enter his heart, as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean, which, though ever full, yet does not quit its bed, obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts.

"The man who, having abandoned all desires, acts without covetousness, selfishness, or pride, deeming himself neither actor nor possessor, attains to rest. This, O son of Pritha, is dependence upon the Supreme Spirit, and he who possesseth it goeth no more astray; having obtained it, if therein esablished at the hour of death, he passeth on to Nirvana in the Supreme."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Second Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION THROUGH APPLICATION TO THE SANKHYA DOCTRINE.

CHAPTER III
DEVOTION THROUGH THE RIGHT PERFORMANCE OF ACTION

ARJUNA:

"If according to thy opinion, O giver of all that men ask, knowledge is superior to the practice of deeds, why then dost thou urge me to engage in an undertaking so dreadful as this? Thou, as it were with doubtful speech, confusest my reason; wherefore choose one method amongst them by which I may obtain happiness and explain it unto me."

KRISHNA:

"It hath before been declared by me, O sinless one, that in this world there are two modes of devotion: that of those who follow the Sankhya, or speculative science, which is the exercise of reason in contemplation; and that of the followers of the *Yoga* school, which is devotion in the performance of action.

"A man enjoyeth not freedom from action from the non-commencement of that which he hath to do; nor doth he obtain happiness from a total abandonment of action. No one ever resteth a moment inactive. Every man is involuntarily urged to act by the qualities which spring from nature. He who remains inert, restraining the senses and organs, yet pondering with his heart upon objects of sense, is called a false pietist of bewildered soul. But he who having subdued all his passions performeth with his active faculties all the duties of life, unconcerned as to their result, is to be esteemed. Do thou perform the proper actions: action is superior to inaction. The journey of thy mortal frame cannot be accomplished by inaction. All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action. Abandon, then, O son of Kuntî, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone. When in ancient times the lord of creatures had formed mankind, and at the same time appointed his

worship, he spoke and said: 'With this worship, pray for increase, and let it be for you Kamaduk, the cow of plenty, on which ye shall depend for the accomplishment of all your wishes. With this nourish the Gods, that the Gods may nourish you; thus mutually nourishing ye shall obtain the highest felicity. The Gods being nourished by worship with sacrifice, will grant you the enjoyment of your wishes. He who enjoyeth what hath been given unto him by them, and offereth not a portion unto them, is even as a thief.' But those who eat not but what is left of the offerings shall be purified of all their transgressions. Those who dress their meat but for themselves eat the bread of sin, being themselves sin incarnate. Beings are nourished by food, food is produced by rain, rain comes from sacrifice, and sacrifice is performed by action. Know that action comes from the Supreme Spirit who is one; wherefore the all-pervading spirit is at all times present in the sacrifice.

"He who, sinfully delighting in the gratification of his passions, doth not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving, liveth in vain, O son of Pritha.

"But the man who only taketh delight in the Self within, is satisfied with that and content with that alone, hath no selfish interest in action. He hath no interest either in that which is done or that which is not done; and there is not, in all things which have been created, any object on which he may place dependence. Therefore perform thou that which thou hast to do, at all times unmindful of the event; for the man who doeth that which he hath to do, without attachment to the result, obtaineth the Supreme. Even by action Janaka and others attained perfection. Even if the good of mankind only is considered by thee, the performance of thy duty will be plain; for whatever is practised by the most excellent men, that is also practiced by others. The world follows whatever example they set. There is nothing, O son of Pritha, in the three regions of the universe which it is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained; and yet I am constantly in action. If I were not indefatigable in action, all men would presently follow my example, O son of Pritha. If I did not perform actions these creatures would perish; I should be the cause of confusion of castes, and should have slain all these creatures. O son of Bharata, as the ignorant perform the duties of life from the hope of

reward, so the wise man, from the wish to bring the world to duty and benefit mankind, should perform his actions without motives of interest. He should not create confusion in the understandings of the ignorant, who are inclined to outward works, but by being himself engaged in action should cause them to act also. All actions are effected by the qualities of nature. The man deluded by ignorance thinks, 'I am the actor.' But he, O strong-armed one! who is acquainted with the nature of the two distinctions of cause and effect, knowing that the qualities act only in the qualities, and that the Self is distinct from them, is not attached in action.

"Those who have not this knowledge are interested in the actions thus brought about by the qualities; and he who is perfectly enlightened should not unsettle those whose discrimination is weak and knowledge incomplete, nor cause them to relax from their duty.

"Throwing every deed on me, and with thy meditation fixed upon the Higher Self, resolve to fight, without expectation, devoid of egotism and free from anguish.

"Those men who constantly follow this my doctrine without reviling it, and with a firm faith, shall be emancipated even by actions; but they who revile it and do not follow it are bewildered in regard to all knowledge, and perish, being devoid of discrimination.

"But the wise man also seeketh for that which is homogeneous with his own nature. All creatures act according to their natures; what, then, will restraint effect? In every purpose of the senses are fixed affection and dislike. A wise man should not fall in the power of these two passions, for they are the enemies of man. It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. It is better to perish in the performance of one's own duty; the duty of another is full of danger."

ARJUNA:

"By what, O descendant of Vrishni, is man propelled to commit offences; seemingly against his will and as if constrained by some secret force?"

KRISHNA:

"It is lust which instigates him. It is passion, sprung from the quality of *rajas*;[6] insatiable, and full of sin. Know this to be the enemy of man on earth. As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust,[7] and as the womb envelopes the foetus, so is the universe surrounded by this passion. By this – the constant enemy of the wise man, formed from desire which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased – is discriminative knowledge surrounded. Its empire is over the senses and organs, the thinking principle and the discriminating faculty also; by means of these it cloudeth discrimination and deludeth the Lord of the body. Therefore, O best of the descendants of Bharata, at the very outset restraining thy senses, thou shouldst conquer this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment.

"The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking self is greater than they. The discriminating principle[8] is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He,[9] Thus knowing what is greater than the discriminating principle and strengthening the lower by the Higher Self, do thou of mighty arms slay this foe which is formed from desire and is difficult to seize."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Third Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION THROUGH THE RIGHT PERFORMANCE OF ACTION.

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[6] *Rajas* is one of the three great qualities; the driving power of nature; active and bad.

[7] The burnished metal mirrors are here referred to.

[8] The discriminating principle is *Buddhi*.

[9] "He," the Supreme Spirit, the true Ego.

CHAPTER IV
DEVOTION THROUGH SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

KRISHNA:

"This exhaustless doctrine of *Yoga* I formerly taught unto Vivaswat;[10] Vivaswat communicated it to Manu[11] and Manu made it known unto Ikshwaku;[12] and being thus transmitted from one unto another it was studied by the Rajarshees,[13] until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost, O harasser of thy foes! It is even the same exhaustless, secret, eternal doctrine I have this day communicated unto thee because thou art my devotee and my friend."

ARJUNA:

"Seeing that thy birth is posterior to the life of Ikshwaku, how am I to understand that thou wert in the beginning the teacher of this doctrine?"

KRISHNA:

"Both I and thou have passed through many births, O harasser of thy foes! Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine.

"Even though myself unborn, of changeless essence, and the lord of all existence, yet in presiding over nature – which is mine – I am born but through my own *maya*,[14] the mystic power of self-ideation, the

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[10] *Vivaswat*, the sun, first manifestation of divine wisdom at the beginning of evolution.

[11] *Manu*, generic title for the reigning spirit of the sensuous universe; the present one being Vaivashwata Manu.

[12] *Ikshwaku*, the founder of the Indian solar dynasty.

[13] *Rajarshees*, Royal Sages.

[14] *Maya*, Illusion.

eternal thought in the eternal mind.[15] I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness. Whoever, O Arjuna, knoweth my divine birth and actions to be even so doth not upon quitting his mortal frame enter into another, for he entereth into me. Many who were free from craving, fear, and anger, filled with my spirit, and who depended upon me, having been purified by the ascetic fire of knowledge, have entered into my being. In whatever way men approach me, in that way do I assist them; but whatever the path taken by mankind, that path is mine, O son of Pritha. Those who wish for success to their works in this life sacrifice to the gods; and in this world success from their actions soon cometh to pass.

"Mankind was created by me of four castes distinct in their principles and in their duties according to the natural distribution of the actions and qualities.[16] Know me, then, although changeless and not acting, to be the author of this. Actions affect me not, nor have I any expectations from the fruits of actions. He who comprehendeth me to be thus is not held by the bonds of action to rebirth. The ancients who longed for eternal salvation, having discovered this, still performed works.

"Wherefore perform thou works even as they were performed by the ancients in former times.

"Even sages have been deluded as to what is action and what inaction; therefore I shall explain to thee what is action by a knowledge of which thou shalt be liberated from evil. One must learn well what is action to be performed, what is not to be, and what is inaction. The path of action is obscure. That man who sees inaction in action and

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[15] See also the *Varaha Upanishad* of *Krishna-Yajur Veda*, viz; "The whole of the universe is evolved through Sankalpa [thought or ideation] alone; it is only through Sankalpa that the universe retains its appearance."

[16] This refers to the four great castes of India; the Brahmin, the soldier, the merchant, and the servant. Such division is plainly evident in every country, even when not named as such.

action in inaction is wise among men; he is a true devotee and a perfect performer of all action.

"Those who have spiritual discrimination call him wise whose undertakings are all free from desire, for his actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge. He abandoneth the desire to see a reward for his actions, is free, contented, and upon nothing dependeth, and although engaged in action he really doeth nothing; he is not solicitous of results, with mind and body subdued and being above enjoyment from objects, doing with the body alone the acts of the body, he does not subject himself to rebirth. He is contented with whatever he receives fortuitously, is free from the influence of 'the pairs of opposites' and from envy, the same in success and failure; even though he act he is not bound by the bonds of action. All the actions of such a man who is free from self-interest, who is devoted, with heart set upon spiritual knowledge, and whose acts are sacrifices for the sake of the Supreme, are dissolved and left without effect on him. The Supreme Spirit is the act of offering, the Supreme Spirit is the sacrificial butter offered in the fire which is the Supreme Spirit, and unto the Supreme Spirit goeth he who maketh the Supreme spirit the object of his meditation in performing his actions.

"Some devotees give sacrifice to the Gods, while others, lighting the subtler fire of the Supreme Spirit offer up themselves; still others make sacrifice with the senses, beginning with hearing, in the fire of self-restraint, and some give up all sense-delighting sounds, and others again, illuminated by spiritual knowledge, sacrifice all the functions of the senses and vitality in the fire of devotion through self-constraint. There are also those who perform sacrifice by wealth given in alms, by mortification, by devotion, and by silent study. Some sacrifice the up-breathing in the down-breathing and the down-breathing in the up-breathing by blocking up the channels of inspiration and expiration; and others by stopping the movements of both the life breaths; still others by abstaining from food sacrifice life in their life.

"All these different kinds of worshippers are by their sacrifices purified from their sins; but they who partake of the perfection of spiritual knowledge arising from such sacrifices pass into the eternal Supreme Spirit. But for him who maketh no sacrifices there is no part

nor lot in this world; how then shall he share in the other, O best of the Kurus?

"All these sacrifices of so many kinds are displayed in the sight of God; know that they all spring from action, and, comprehending this, thou shalt obtain an eternal release. O harasser of thy foes, the sacrifice through spiritual knowledge is superior to sacrifice made with material things; every action without exception is comprehended in spiritual knowledge, O son of Pritha. Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bharata. By this knowledge thou shalt see all things and creatures whatsoever in thyself and then in me. Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge. As the natural fire, O Arjuna, reduceth fuel to ashes, so does the fire of knowledge reduce all actions to ashes. There is no purifier in this world to be compared to spiritual knowledge; and he who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time. The man who restraineth the senses and organs and hath faith obtaineth spiritual knowledge, and having obtained it he soon reacheth supreme tranquility; but the ignorant, those full of doubt and without faith, are lost. The man of doubtful mind hath no happiness either in this world or in the next or in any other. No actions bind that man who through spiritual discrimination hath renounced action and cut asunder all doubt by knowledge, O despiser of wealth. Wherefore, O son of Bharata, having cut asunder with the sword of spiritual knowledge this doubt which existeth in thy heart, engage in the performance of action. Arise!"

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Fourth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION THROUGH SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

CHAPTER V
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

ARJUNA:

"At one time, O Krishna, thou praisest the renunciation of action, and yet again its right performance. Tell me with certainty which of the two is better?"

KRISHNA:

"Renunciation of action and devotion through action are both means of final emancipation, but of these two devotion through action is better than renunciation. He is considered to be an ascetic[17] who seeks nothing and nothing rejects, being free from the influence of the 'pairs of opposites,'[18] O thou of mighty arms; without trouble he is released from the bonds forged by action. Children only and not the wise speak of renunciation of action[19] and of right performance of action[20] as being different. He who perfectly practices the one receives the fruits of both, and the place[21] which is gained by the renouncer of action is also attained by him who is devoted in action. That man seeth with clear sight who seeth that the Sankhya and the *Yoga* doctrines are identical. But to attain to true renunciation of action without devotion through action is difficult, O thou of mighty arms; while the devotee who is engaged in the right practice of his duties approacheth the Supreme Spirit in no long time. The man of purified heart, having his body fully controlled, his senses restrained, and for whom the only self is the Self of all creatures, is not tainted although performing actions.

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[17] That is, one who has really renounced.

[18] That is, cold and heat, pleasure and pain, misery and happiness, etc.

[19] Sankhya school.

[20] Yoga school.

[21] Nirvana, or emancipation.

The devotee who knows the divine truth thinketh 'I am doing nothing' in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing; even when speaking, letting go or taking, opening or closing his eyes, he sayeth, 'the senses and organs move by natural impulse to their appropriate objects.' Whoever in acting dedicates his actions to the Supreme Spirit and puts aside all selfish interest in their result is untouched by sin, even as the leaf of the lotus is unaffected by the waters. The truly devoted, for the purification of the heart, perform actions with their bodies, their minds, their understanding, and their senses, putting away all self-interest. The man who is devoted and not attached to the fruit of his actions obtains tranquility; whilst he who through desire has attachment for the fruit of action is bound down thereby.[22] The self-restrained sage having with his heart renounced all actions, dwells at rest in the 'nine gate city of his abode,'[23] neither acting nor causing to act.[24]

"The Lord of the world creates neither the faculty of acting, nor actions, nor the connection between action and its fruits; but nature prevaileth in these. The Lord receives no man's deeds, be they sinful or full of merit.[25] The truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray. But in those for whom knowledge of the true Self has dispersed ignorance, the Supreme, as if lighted by the sun, is revealed. Those whose souls are in the Spirit, whose asylum is in it, who are intent on it and purified by knowledge from all sins, go to that place from which there is no return.

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[22] This refers not only to the effect on the man now, in life, but also to the "binding to rebirth" which such action causes.

[23] That is, the body as having nine openings through which impressions are received, *viz,*: eyes, ears, mouth, nose, etc.

[24] The Sage who has united himself to true consciousness remains in the body for the benefit of mankind.

[25] In order to understand this clearly it is necessary to remember that in the Vedic philosophy it is held that all actions, whether they be good or bad, are brought about by the three great qualities – *sattva, rajas, tamas* – inherent in all throughout evolution. This is set forth at length in the 7th Chapter, and in Chapter 13 the manner in which those qualities show themselves is fully given.

"The illuminated sage regards with equal mind an illuminated, selfless Brahmin, a cow, an elephant, a dog, and even an outcast who eats the flesh of dogs. Those who thus preserve an equal mind gain heaven even in this life, for the Supreme is free from sin and equal minded; therefore they rest in the Supreme Spirit. The man who knoweth the Supreme Spirit, who is not deluded, and who is fixed on him, doth not rejoice at obtaining what is pleasant, nor grieve when meeting what is unpleasant. He whose heart is not attached to objects of sense finds pleasure within himself, and, through devotion, united with the Supreme, enjoys imperishable bliss. For those enjoyments which arise through the contact of the senses with external objects are wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end; O son of Kuntî, the wise man delighteth not in these. He who, while living in this world and before the liberation of the soul from the body, can resist the impulse arising from desire and anger is a devotee and blesséd. The man who is happy within himself, who is illuminated within, is a devotee, and partaking of the nature of the Supreme Spirit, he is merged in it. Such illuminated sages whose sins are exhausted, who are free from delusion, who have their senses and organs under control, and devoted to the good of all creatures, obtain assimilation with the Supreme Spirit.[26] Assimilation with the Supreme Spirit is on both sides of death for those who are free from desire and anger, temperate, of thoughts restrained; and who are acquainted with the true Self.

"The anchorite who shutteth his placid soul away from all sense of touch, with gaze fixed between his brows; who maketh the breath to pass through both his nostrils with evenness alike in inspiration and expiration, whose senses and organs together with his heart and understanding are under control, and who hath set his heart upon liberation and is ever free from desire and anger, is emancipated from birth and death even in this life. Knowing that I, the great Lord of all worlds, am the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances and the friend of all creatures, he shall obtain me and be blessed."

[26] That is, direct knowledge of Self.

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Fifth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION.

CHAPTER VI
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SELF-RESTRAINT

KRISHNA:

"He who, unattached to the fruit of his actions, performeth such actions as should be done is both a renouncer[27] of action and a devotee[28] of right action; not he who liveth without kindling the sacrificial fire and without ceremonies.[29] Know, O son of Pandu, that what they call *Sannyas* or a forsaking of action is the same as *Yoga* or the practice of devotion. No one without having previously renounced all intentions can be devoted. Action is said to be the means by which the wise man who is desirous of mounting to meditation may reach thereto; so cessation from action is said to be the means for him who hath reached to meditation. When he hath renounced all intentions and is devoid of attachment to action in regard to objects of sense, then he is called one who hath ascended to meditation. He should raise the self by the Self; let him not suffer the Self to be lowered; for Self is the friend of self, and in like manner, self is its own enemy.[30] Self is the friend of the man who is self-conquered; so self like a foe hath enmity to him who is not self-conquered. The Self of the man who is self-subdued and free from desire and anger is intent on the Supreme Self in heat and cold, in pain and pleasure, in honor and ignominy. The man who hath spiritual knowledge and discernment, who standeth upon the pinnacle, and hath subdued the senses, to whom gold and stone are the same, is said to be devoted. And he is esteemed among all

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[27] A Sannyasi.

[28] A Yogi

[29] Those ceremonies prescribed by the Brahmanical law.

[30] In this play upon "self" the Higher and the lower self are meant, in that the lower is the enemy of the Higher through its resistance to true development; and the lower self is at the same time the enemy of its own best interests through its downward tendency.

who, whether amongst his friends and companions, in the midst of enemies or those who stand aloof or remain neutral, with those who love and those who hate, and in the company of sinners or the righteous, is of equal mind.

"He who has attained to meditation should constantly strive to stay at rest in the Supreme, remaining in solitude and seclusion, having his body and his thoughts under control, without possessions and free from hope. He should in an undefiled spot place his seat, firm, neither too high nor too low, and made of kusa grass which is covered with a skin and a cloth.[31] There, for the self's purification he should practice meditation with his mind fixed on one point, the modifications of the thinking principle controlled and the action of the senses and organs restrained. Keeping his body, head, and neck firm and erect, with mind determined, and gaze directed to the tip of his nose without looking in any direction, with heart at peace and free from fear, the Yogee should remain, settled in the vow of a Brahmacharya, his thoughts controlled, and heart fixed on me. The devotee of controlled mind who thus always bringeth his heart to rest in the Supreme reacheth that tranquility, the supreme assimilation with me.

"This divine discipline, Arjuna, is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching. The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking. When the man, so living, centers his heart in the true Self and is exempt from attachment to all desires, he is said to have attained to *Yoga*. Of the sage of self-centered heart, at rest and free from attachment to desires, the simile is recorded, 'as a lamp which is sheltered from the wind flickereth not.' When regulated by

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[31] These directions are for those hermits who have retired from the world. Many of the translators have variously construed the text; one reads that the devotee has "only skin and sheet to cover him and grass to lie upon"; another that "his goods are a cloth and deerskin and kusa grass." "Those who know" say that this is a description of a magnetically arranged seat and that kusa grass is laid on the ground, the skin on the grass, and the cloth on the skin. Philological discussion will never decide the point.

the practice of *yoga* and at rest, seeing the self by the self, he is contented; when he becometh acquainted with that boundless bliss which is not connected with objects of the senses, and being where he is not moved from the reality;[32] having gained which he considereth no other superior to it, and in which, being fixed, he is not moved even by the greatest grief; know that this disconnection from union with pain is distinguished as *yoga*, spiritual union or devotion, which is to be striven after by a man with faith and steadfastly.

"When he hath abandoned every desire that ariseth from the imagination and subdued with the mind the senses and organs which impel to action in every direction, being possessed of patience, he by degrees finds rest; and, having fixed his mind at rest in the true Self, he should think of nothing else. To whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out he should subdue it, bring it back, and place it upon the Spirit. Supreme bliss surely cometh to the sage whose mind is thus at peace; whose passions and desires are thus subdued; who is thus in the true Self and free from sin. He who is thus devoted and free from sin obtaineth without hindrance the highest bliss – union with the Supreme Spirit. The man who is endued with this devotion and who seeth the unity of all things perceiveth the Supreme Soul in all things and all things in the Supreme Soul. He who seeth me in all things and all things in me looseneth not his hold on me and I forsake him not. And whosoever, believing in spiritual unity, worshipeth me who am in all things, dwelleth with me in whatsoever condition he may be. He, O Arjuna, who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee."

ARJUNA:

"O slayer of Madhu,[33] on account of the restlessness of the mind, I do not perceive any possibility of steady continuance in this *yoga* of equanimity which thou hast declared. For indeed, O Krishna, the mind

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[32] "Reality," Nirvana and also complete realization of the True and the disappearance of the illusion as to objects and separateness.

[33] Madhu; a daitya or demon slain by Krishna, and representing the quality of passion in nature.

is full of agitation, turbulent, strong, and obstinate. I believe the restraint of it to be as difficult as that of the wind."

KRISHNA:

"Without doubt, O thou of mighty arms, the mind is restless and hard to restrain; but it may be restrained, O son of Kuntî, by practice and absence of desire. Yet in my opinion this divine discipline called *yoga* is very difficult for one who hath not his soul in his own control; yet it may be acquired through proper means and by one who is assiduous and controlleth his heart."

ARJUNA:

"What end, O Krishna, doth that man attain who, although having faith, hath not attained to perfection in his devotion because his unsubdued mind wandered from the discipline? Doth he, fallen from both,[34] like a broken cloud without any support,[35] become destroyed, O strong-armed one, being deluded in the path of the Supreme Spirit? Thou Krishna, shouldst completely dispel this doubt for me, for there is none other to be found able to remove it."

KRISHNA:

"Such a man, O son of Pritha, doth not perish here or hereafter. For never to an evil place goeth one who doeth good. The man whose devotion has been broken off by death goeth to the regions of the righteous,[36] where he dwells for an immensity of years and is then born again on earth in a pure and fortunate family;[37] or even in a family of those who are spiritually illuminated. But such a rebirth into this life as this last is more difficult to obtain. Being thus born again he

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[34] "From both" here means the good Karma resulting from good deeds and spiritual knowledge acquired through yoga, or heaven and emancipation.

[35] "Without any support" refers to the support or sanction contained in the Brahmanical law in its promises to him who keeps it, for he who practices yoga is not abiding by the promises of the law, which are for those who obey that law and refrain from yoga.

[36] That is, *Devachan*.

[37] Madhusudana says this means in the family of a king or emperor.

comes in contact with the knowledge which belonged to him in his former body, and from that time he struggles more diligently towards perfection, O son of Kuru. For even unwittingly, by reason of that past practice, he is led and works on. Even if only a mere enquirer, he reaches beyond the word of the *Vedas*. But the devotee who, striving with all his might, obtaineth perfection because of efforts continued through many births, goeth to the supreme goal. The man of meditation as thus described is superior to the man of penance and to the man of learning and also to the man of action; wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve thou to become a man of meditation. But of all devotees he is considered by me as the most devoted who, with heart fixed on me, full of faith, worships me."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Sixth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SELF-RESTRAINT.

CHAPTER VII
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

KRISHNA:

"Hear, O son of Pritha, how with heart fixed on me, practicing meditation and taking me as thy refuge, thou shalt know me completely. I will instruct thee fully in this knowledge and in its realization, which, having learned, there remains nothing else to be known.

"Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am. Earth, water, fire, air, and *akâsa*, *Manas*, *Buddhi*, and *Ahankara* is the eightfold division of my nature. It is inferior; know that my superior nature is different and is the knower; by it the universe is sustained; learn that the whole of creation springs from this too as from a womb; I am the cause, I am the production and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is none superior to me, O conqueror of wealth, and all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string. I am the taste in water, O son of Kuntî, the light in the sun and moon, the mystic syllable OM in all the *Vedas*, sound in space, the masculine essence in men, the sweet smell in the earth, and the brightness in the fire. In all creatures I am the life, and the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the spirit. Know me, O son of Pritha, as the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the wisdom[38] of the wise and the strength of the strong. And I am the power of the strong who in action are free from desire and longing; in all creatures I am desire regulated by moral fitness. Know also that the dispositions arising from the three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, are from me; they are in me, but I am not in them. The whole world, being deluded by these dispositions which are born of the three qualities, knoweth not me distinct from

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[38] This means here the principle "*Buddhi*."

them, supreme, imperishable. For this my divine illusive power, acting through the natural qualities, is difficult to surmount, and those only can surmount it who have recourse to me alone. The wicked among men, the deluded and the low-minded, deprived of spiritual perception by this illusion, and inclining toward demoniacal dispositions, do not have recourse to me.

"Four classes of men who work righteousness worship me, O Arjuna: those who are afflicted, the searchers for truth, those who desire possessions, and the wise, O son of Bharata. Of these the best is the one possessed of spiritual knowledge, who is always devoted to me. I am extremely dear to the wise man, and he is dear unto me. Excellent indeed are all these, but the spiritually wise is verily myself, because with heart at peace he is upon the road that leadeth to the highest path, which is even myself. After many births the spiritually wise findeth me as the Vasudeva who is all this, for such an one of great soul[39] is difficult to meet. Those who through diversity of desires are deprived of spiritual wisdom adopt particular rites subordinated to their own natures, and worship other Gods. In whatever form a devotee desires with faith to worship, it is I alone who inspire him with constancy therein, and depending on that faith he seeks the propitiation of that God, obtaining the object of his wishes as is ordained by me alone. But the reward of such short-sighted men is temporary. Those who worship the Gods go to the Gods, and those who worship me come unto me. The ignorant, being unacquainted with my supreme condition which is superior to all things and exempt from decay, believe me who am unmanifested to exist in a visible form. Enveloped by my magic illusion I am not visible to the world; therefore the world doth not recognize me the unborn and exhaustless. I know, O Arjuna, all creatures that have been, that are present, as well as all that shall hereafter be, but no one knows me. At the time of birth, O son of Bharata, all beings fall into error by reason of the delusion of the opposites which springs from liking and disliking, O harasser of thy foes. But those men of righteous lives whose sins have ceased, being free from this delusion of the 'pairs of opposites,' firmly settled in faith, worship me. They who depend on me, and labor for

[39] In the original the word is "Mahatma."

deliverance from birth and death know Brahmâ, the whole Adhyâtma, and all Karma. Those who rest in me, knowing me to be the Adhibhûta, the Adhidaivata, and the Adhiyajna, know me also at the time of death."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Seventh Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT.

CHAPTER VIII
DEVOTION TO THE OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT NAMED AS OM

ARJUNA:

"What is that Brahman, what is Adhyâtma, and what, O best of men, is Karma? What also is Adhibhûta, and what Adhidaivata ? Who, too, is Adhiyajna here, in this body, and how therein, O slayer of Madhu? Tell me also how men who are fixed in meditation are to know thee at the hour of death?"

KRISHNA:

"Brahman the Supreme is the exhaustless. Adhyâtma is the name of my being manifesting as the Individual Self. Karma is the emanation which causes the existence and reproduction of creatures.[40] Adhibhûta is the Supreme Spirit dwelling in all elemental nature through the mysterious power of nature's illusion. Adhidaivata is the *Purusha*, the Spiritual Person, and Adhiyajna is myself in this body, O best of embodied men. Whoever at the hour of death abandoneth the body, fixed in meditation upon me, without doubt goeth to me. Whoso in consequence of constant meditation on any particular form thinketh upon it when quitting his mortal shape, even to that doth he go, O son of Kuntî. Therefore at all times meditate only on me and fight. Thy mind and *Buddhi* being placed on me alone, thou shalt without doubt come to me. The man whose heart abides in me alone, wandering to no other object, shall also by meditation on the Supreme Spirit go to it, O son of Pritha. Whosoever shall meditate upon the All-Wise which is without beginning, the Supreme Ruler, the smallest of the small, the Supporter of all, whose form is incomprehensible, bright as the sun beyond the darkness; with mind undeviating, united to devotion, and by the power of meditation concentrated at the hour of death, with his

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[40] Karma here is, so to say, the action of the Supreme which is seen in manifestation throughout the evolution of the objective worlds.

vital powers placed between the eyebrows, attains to that Supreme Divine Spirit.

"I will now make known to thee that path which the learned in the *Vedas* call indestructible, into which enter those who are free from attachments, and is followed by those desirous of leading the life of a Brahmacharya[41] laboring for salvation. He who closeth all the doors of his senses, imprisoneth his mind in his heart, fixeth his vital powers in his head, standing firm in meditation, repeating the monosyllable OM, and thus continues when he is quitting the body, goeth to the supreme goal. He who, with heart undiverted to any other object, meditates constantly and through the whole of life on me shall surely attain to me, O son of Pritha. Those great-souled ones who have attained to supreme perfection come unto me and no more incur rebirths rapidly revolving, which are mansions of pain and sorrow.

"All worlds up to that of Brahman are subject to rebirth again and again, but they, O son of Kuntî, who reach to me have no rebirth. Those who are acquainted with day and night[42] know that the day of Brahmâ is a thousand revolutions of the yugas and that his night extendeth for a thousand more. At the coming on of that day all things issue forth from the unmanifested into manifestation, so on the approach of that night they merge again into the unmanifested. This collection of existing things having thus come forth, is dissolved at the approach of the night, O son of Pritha; and now again on the coming of the day it emanates spontaneously. But there is that which upon the dissolution of all things else is not destroyed; it is indivisible, indestructible, and of another nature from the visible. That called the unmanifested and exhaustless is called the supreme goal, which having once attained they never more return – it is my supreme abode. This Supreme, O son of Pritha, within whom all creatures are included and by whom all this is pervaded, may be attained by a devotion which is intent on him alone.

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[41] *Brahmacharya* vow is a vow to live a life of religious study and asceticism – "following Brahma."

[42] This refers to those who have acquired knowledge of the ultimate divisions of time, a power which is ascribed to the perfect yogi in *Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy*.

"I will now declare to thee, O best of the Bharatas, at what time *yogis* dying obtain freedom from or subjection to rebirth. Fire, light, day, the fortnight of the waxing moon, six months of the sun's northern course – going then and knowing the Supreme Spirit, men go to the Supreme. But those who depart in smoke, at night, during the fortnight of the waning moon, and while the sun is in the path of his southern journey, proceed for a while to the regions of the moon and again return to mortal birth. These two, *light* and *darkness*, are the world's eternal ways; by one a man goes not to return, by the other he cometh back again upon earth. No devotee, O son of Pritha, who knoweth these two paths is ever deluded; wherefore, O Arjuna, at all times be thou fixed in devotion.[43] The man of meditation who knoweth all this reaches beyond whatever rewards are promised in the *Vedas* or that result from sacrifices or austerities or from gifts of charity, and goeth to the supreme, the highest place."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Eighth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION TO THE OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT NAMED AS OM.

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[43] The paragraph up to here is thought by some European Sanscritists to be an interpolation, but that view is not held by all, nor is it accepted by the Hindus.

CHAPTER IX
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE KINGLY KNOWLEDGE AND THE KINGLY MYSTERY

KRISHNA:

"Unto thee who findeth no fault I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge, coupled with a realization of it, which having known thou shalt be delivered from evil. This is the royal knowledge, the royal mystery, the most excellent purifier, clearly comprehensible, not opposed to sacred law, easy to perform, and inexhaustible. These who are unbelievers in this truth, O harasser of thy foes, find me not, but revolving in rebirth return to this world, the mansion of death.

"All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them. Nor are all things in me; behold this my divine mystery: myself causing things to exist and supporting them all but dwelling not in them. Understand that all things are in me even as the mighty air which passes everywhere is in space. O son of Kuntî, at the end of a kalpa all things return unto my nature, and then again at the beginning of another kalpa I cause them to evolve again. Taking control of my own nature I emanate again and again this whole assemblage of beings, without their will, by the power of the material essence.[44] These acts do not bind me, O conqueror of wealth, because I am as one who sitteth indifferent, uninterested in those works. By reason of my supervision nature produceth the animate and inanimate universe; it is through this cause, O son of Kuntî, that the universe revolveth.

"The deluded despise me in human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things. They are of vain hopes, deluded in action, in reason and in knowledge, inclining to demoniac and

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[44] That is to say, by the power of "*prakriti*."

deceitful principles.[45] But those great of soul, partaking of the godlike nature, knowing me to be the imperishable principle of all things, worship me, diverted to nothing else. Fixed in unbroken vows they worship, everywhere proclaiming me and bowing down to me. Others with the sacrifice of knowledge in other ways worship me as indivisible, as separable, as the Spirit of the universe. I am the sacrifice and sacrificial rite; I am the libation offered to ancestors, and the spices; I am the sacred formula and the fire; I am the food and the sacrificial butter; I am the father and the mother of this universe, the grandsire and the preserver; I am the Holy One, the object of knowledge, the mystic purifying syllable OM, the *Rik*, the *Saman*, the *Yajur*, and all the *Vedas*. I am the goal, the Comforter, the Lord, the Witness, the resting-place, the asylum and the Friend; I am the origin and the dissolution, the receptacle, the storehouse, and the eternal seed. I cause light and heat and rain; I now draw in and now let forth; I am death and immortality; I am the cause unseen and the visible effect. Those enlightened in the three *Vedas*, offering sacrifices to me and obtaining sanctification from drinking the soma juice,[46] petition me for heaven; thus they attain the region of Indra,[47] the prince of celestial beings, and there feast upon celestial food and are gratified with heavenly enjoyments. And they, having enjoyed that spacious heaven for a period in proportion to their merits, sink back into this mortal world where they are born again as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted; thus those who long for the accomplishment of desires, following the *Vedas*, obtain a happiness which comes and goes. But for those who, thinking of me as identical with all, constantly worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness. And even those also who worship other gods with a firm faith in doing so, involuntarily worship me, too, O son of Kuntî, albeit in ignorance. I am he who is the Lord of all sacrifices, and am also their enjoyer, but they do not

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[45] This reads that "they are inclined to the nature of the asuras and rakshasas," a class of evil elementals of beings, or, as some say, "of the nature of the very low constituents of nature."

[46] Among the Hindus the drinking of the soma at the end of a sacrifice is an act of great merit, with its analogy in the Christian faith in the drinking of the communion wine.

[47] "The region of Indra" is the highest of the celestial spheres. It is the *devachan* of theosophical literature, for Indra is the prince of the celestial beings who abide in deva-sthan.

understand me truly and therefore they fall from heaven. Those who devote themselves to the gods go to the gods; the worshippers of the *pitris* go to the *pitris*; those who worship the evil spirits go to them, and my worshippers come to me. I accept and enjoy the offerings of the humble soul who in his worship with a pure heart offereth a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water unto me. Whatever thou doest, O son of Kuntî, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me. Thus thou shalt be delivered from the good and evil experiences which are the bonds of action; and thy heart being joined to renunciation and to the practice of action, thou shalt come to me. I am the same to all creatures; I know not hatred nor favor; but those who serve me with love dwell in me and I in them. Even if the man of most evil ways worship me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright. Such a man soon becometh of a righteous soul and obtaineth perpetual happiness. I swear, O son of Kuntî, that he who worships me never perisheth. Those even who may be of the womb of sin, women,[48] vaisyas, and sudras,* shall tread the highest path if they take sanctuary with me. How much more, then, holy brahmans and devotees of kingly race! Having obtained this finite, joyless world, worship me. Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Ninth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE KINGLY KNOWLEDGE AND THE KINGLY MYSTERY.

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[48] This may seem strange to those who have been born in Christendom, and perhaps appear to be testimony to harsh views on the part of Hindu sages respecting women, but in the Bible the same thing is to be found and even worse, where in *I Tim.* 2, 11-15, it is declared that the woman shall be saved through her husband, and that she must be subservient. * Vaisyas and sudras are the two lower castes, or merchants and servitors.

CHAPTER X
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE PERFECTIONS

KRISHNA:

"Hear again, O thou of mighty arms, my supreme words, which unto thee who art well pleased I will declare because I am anxious for thy welfare.

"Neither the assemblage of the Gods nor the Adept Kings know my origin, because I am the origin of all the Gods and of the Adepts. Whosoever knoweth me to be the mighty Ruler of the universe and without birth or beginning, he among men, undeluded, shall be liberated from all his sins. Subtle perception, spiritual knowledge, right judgment, patience, truth, self-mastery; pleasure and pain, prosperity and adversity; birth and death, danger and security, fear and equanimity, satisfaction, restraint of body and mind, alms-giving, inoffensiveness, zeal and glory and ignominy, all these the various dispositions of creatures come from me. So in former days the seven great Sages and the four Manus who are of my nature were born of my mind, and from them sprang this world. He who knoweth perfectly this permanence and mystic faculty of mine becometh without doubt possessed of unshaken faith. I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me; believing me to be thus, the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me; their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another and constantly speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction. To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment."

ARJUNA:

"Thou art Parabrahm![49] the supreme abode, the great Purification; thou art the Eternal Presence, the divine Being, before all other Gods, holy, primeval, all-pervading, without beginning! Thus thou art declared by all the Sages – by Narada, Asita, Devala, Vyasa, and thou thyself now doth say the same. I firmly believe all that thou, O Keshava, sayest unto me; for neither Gods nor demons comprehend thy manifestations. Thou alone knowest thyself by thy Self, Supreme Spirit, Creator and Master of all that lives, God of Gods, and Lord of all the universe! Thou alone can fully declare thy divine powers by which thou hast pervaded and continueth to pervade these worlds. How shall I, constantly thinking of thee, be able to know thee, O mysterious Lord? In what particular forms shall I meditate on thee? O Janardana – besought by mortals – tell me therefore in full thine own powers and forms of manifestation, for I am never sated of drinking of the life-giving water of thy words."

KRISHNA:

"O best of Kurus, blessings be upon thee.[50] I will make thee acquainted with the chief of my divine manifestations, for the extent of my nature is infinite.

"I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle, and the end of all existing things. Among Adityas[51] I am Vishnu, and among luminous bodies I am the sun. I am Mrichi among the Maruts,[52] and among heavenly mansions I am the moon. Among the *Vedas* I am the *Samaveda*,[53] and Indra[54] among the

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[49] Beyond Brahma.

[50] In the original the first word is one which carries a blessing with it; it is a benediction and means "now then," but this in English conveys no idea of a benediction.

[51] Adityas, the twelve Sun-gods, who at the recurrence of the time for dissolution by fire, bring on the universal conflagration.

[52] The Gods of air.

[53] In Western language this may be said to be the *Veda* of song in the very highest sense of the power of song. Many nations held that song had the power to make even mere matter change and move obedient to the sound.

Gods; among the senses and organs I am the *Manas*,[55] and of creatures the existence. I am Shankara among the Rudras; and Vittesha, the lord of wealth among the Yakshas[56] and Rakshasas.[57] I am Pavaka among the Vasus,[58] and Meru[59] among high-aspiring mountains. And know, O son of Pritha, that I am Brihaspati,[60] the chief of teachers; among leaders of celestial armies Skanda, and of floods I am the ocean. I am Bhrigu among the Adept Kings; of words I am the monosyllable OM; of forms of worship, the silent repetition of sacred texts, and of immovable things I am the Himalaya. Of all the trees of the forest I am *Ashwattha*, the Pimpala tree; and of the celestial Sages, Narada; among Gandharbhas[61] I am Chitraratha, and of perfect saints, Kapila. Know that among horses I am Uchchisrava, who arose with the Amrita out of the ocean; among elephants, Airavata, and among men their sovereigns. Of weapons I am the thunderbolt; among cows, Kamaduk, the cow of plenty; of procreators, the god of love, and of serpents, Vasuki,[62] their chief. I am Ananta among the Nagas,[63] Varuna among things of the waters; among the ancestors, Aryana, and of all who judge I am Yama.[64] Among the Daityas I am Prahlada, and among computations I am Time itself; the lion among beasts, and Garuda[65] among the feathered tribe. Among purifiers I am Pavana, the air; Rama among those who carry arms, Makara among the fishes, and the Ganges among rivers. Among that which is evolved, O Arjuna, I am the beginning, the middle, and the end; of all sciences I am the

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[54] In the original it is "Vasava" which is a name of Indra.

[55] The heart or the mind.

[56] Spirits of a sensual nature.

[57] An order of evil spirits.

[58] Among the first created Beings of a high order.

[59] Said by some to be the North Pole.

[60] Jupiter, the teacher of the Devas.

[61] Celestial host of singers; they are a class of elementals.

[62] Poisonous serpents.

[63] Non-poisonous serpents of a fabled sort, said to have speech and wisdom.

[64] The Judge of the dead.

[65] Garuda, the bird of Vishnu, and also means esoterically the whole manvantaric cycle.

knowledge of the Adhyâtma,[66] and of uttered sounds the human speech. Among letters I am the vowel A, and of all compound words I am the Dwandwa;[67] I am endless time itself, and the Preserver whose face is turned on all sides. I am all-grasping death, and the birth of those who are to be; among feminine things I am fame, fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, patience, and forgiveness. Among the hymns of the *Samaveda* I am *Brihat Saman*, and the Gayatri among metres; among months I am the month Margashirsha,[68] and of seasons spring called Kusumakra, the time of flowers.

"Of those things which deceive I am the dice, and splendor itself among splendid things. I am victory, I am perseverance, and the goodness of the good. Of the race of Vrishni I am Vasudeva; of the Pandava I am Arjuna the conqueror of wealth; of perfect saints I am Vyasa,[69] and of prophet-seers I am the bard Oosana. Among rulers I am the rod of punishment; among those desiring conquest I am policy; and among the wise of secret knowledge I am their silence. I am, O Arjuna, the seed of all existing things, and there is not anything, whether animate or inanimate which is without me. My divine manifestations, O harasser of thy foes, are without end, the many which I have mentioned are by way of example. Whatever creature is permanent, of good fortune or mighty, also know it to be sprung from a portion of my energy. But what, O Arjuna, hast thou to do with so much knowledge as this? I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Tenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE PERFECTIONS.

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[66] The highest spiritual knowledge.

[67] A form of compound word in the Sanskrit which preserves the meaning of the words making up the compound.

[68] The month when the regular rains have stopped and the heat abated.

[69] Vyasa, the author of the *Mahabharata*.

CHAPTER XI
VISION OF THE DIVINE FORM AS INCLUDING ALL FORMS

ARJUNA:

"My delusion has been dispersed by the words which thou for my soul's peace hast spoken concerning the mystery of the Adhyâtma – the spirit. For I have heard at full length from thee, O thou whose eyes are like lotus leaves, the origin and dissolution of existing things, and also thy inexhaustible majesty. It is even as thou hast described thyself, O mighty Lord; I now desire to see thy divine form, O sovereign Lord. Wherefore, O Lord, if thou thinkest it may be beheld by me, show me, O Master of devotion, thine inexhaustible Self."

KRISHNA:

"Behold, O son of Pritha, my forms by hundreds and by thousands, of diverse kinds divine, of many shapes and fashions. Behold the Adityas, Vasus, Rudras, Aswins, and the Maruts, see things wonderful never seen before, O son of Bharata. Here in my body now behold, O Gudakesha, the whole universe animate and inanimate gathered here in one, and all things else thou hast a wish to see. But as with thy natural eyes thou art not able to see me, I will give thee the divine eye. Behold my sovereign power and might!"

SANJAYA:

O king, having thus spoken, Hari,[70] the mighty Lord of mysterious power, showed to the son of Pritha his supreme form; with many mouths and eyes and many wonderful appearances, with many divine ornaments, many celestial weapons upraised; adorned with celestial garlands and robes, anointed with celestial ointments and perfumes,

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[70] *Hari*, an epithet of Krishna, meaning that he has the power to remove all difficulty.

full of every marvelous thing, the eternal god whose face is turned in all directions. The glory and amazing splendor of this mighty Being may be likened to the radiance shed by a thousand suns rising together into the heavens. The son of Pandu then beheld within the body of the God of gods the whole universe in all its vast variety. Overwhelmed with wonder, Dhananjaya,[71] the possessor of wealth, with hair standing on end, bowed down his head before the Deity, and thus with joined palms[72] addressed him:

ARJUNA:

"I behold, O god of gods, within thy frame all beings and things of every kind; the Lord Brahmâ on his lotus throne, all the Rishees and the heavenly Serpents.[73] I see thee on all sides, of infinite forms, having many arms, stomachs, mouths, and eyes. But I can discover neither thy beginning, thy middle, nor thy end, O universal Lord, form of the universe. I see thee crowned with a diadem and armed with mace and chakra,[74] a mass of splendor, darting light on all sides; difficult to behold, shining in every direction with light immeasurable, like the burning fire or glowing sun. Thou art the supreme inexhaustible Being, the end of effort, changeless, the Supreme Spirit of this universe, the never-failing guardian of eternal law: I esteem thee *Purusha*,[75] I see thee without beginning, middle, or end, of infinite power with arms innumerable, the sun and moon thy eyes, thy mouth a flaming fire, overmastering the whole universe with thy majesty. Space and heaven, and earth and every point around the three regions of the universe are filled with thee alone. The triple world is full of fear, O thou mighty Spirit, seeing this thy marvelous form of terror. Of the assemblage of the gods some I see fly to thee for refuge, while some in fear with

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[71] Arjuna.

[72] This is the Hindu mode of salutation.

[73] These are the Uragas, said to be serpents. But it must refer to the great Masters of Wisdom, who were often called Serpents.

[74] Among human weapons this would be known as the discus, but here it means the whirling wheels of spiritual will and power

[75] Purusha, the Eternal Person. The same name is also given to man by the Hindus.

joined hands sing forth thy praise; the hosts of the Maharshis and Siddhas, great sages and saints, hail thee, saying 'svasti,'[76] and glorify thee with most excellent hymns. The Rudras, Adityas, the Vasus, and all those beings – the Sadhyas, Vishwas, the Ashwins, Maruts, and Ushmapas, the hosts of Gandharbhas, Yakshas, and Siddhas[77] – all stand gazing on thee and are amazed. All the worlds alike with me are terrified to behold thy wondrous form gigantic, O thou of mighty arms, with many mouths and eyes, with many arms, thighs and feet, with many stomachs and projecting tusks. For seeing thee thus touching the heavens, shining with such glory, with widely-opened mouths and bright expanded eyes, my inmost soul is troubled and I lose both firmness and tranquility, O Vishnu. Beholding thy dreadful teeth and thy face like the burning of death, I can see neither heaven nor earth; I find no peace; have mercy, O Lord of gods, thou Spirit of the universe! The sons of Dhritarâshtra with all these rulers of men, Bhîshma, Drôna and also Karna and our principal warriors, seem to be impetuously precipitating themselves into thy mouths terrible with tusks; some are seen caught between thy teeth, their heads ground down. As the rapid streams of full-flowing rivers roll on to meet the ocean, even so these heroes of the human race rush into thy flaming mouths. As troops of insects carried away by strong impulse find death in the fire, even so do these beings with swelling force pour into thy mouths for their own destruction. Thou involvest and swallowest all these creatures from every side, licking them in thy flaming lips; filling the universe with thy splendor, thy sharp beams burn, O Vishnu. Reverence be unto thee, O best of Gods! Be favorable! I seek to know thee, the Primeval One, for I know not thy work."

KRISHNA:

"I am Time matured, come hither for the destruction of these creatures; except thyself, not one of all these warriors here drawn up in serried ranks shall live. Wherefore, arise! seize fame! Defeat the foe and

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[76] This cry is supposed to be for the benefit of the world, and has that meaning.

[77] All these names refer to different classes of celestial beings, some of which are now called in theosophical literature, "elementals"; the others are explained in H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine*.

enjoy the full-grown kingdom! They have been already slain by me; be thou only the immediate agent, O thou both-armed one.[78] Be not disturbed. Slay Drôna, Bhîshma, Jayadratha, Karna, and all the other heroes of the war who are really slain by me. Fight, thou wilt conquer all thine enemies."

SANJAYA:

When he of the resplendent diadem[79] heard these words from the mouth of Keshava,[80] he saluted Krishna with joined palms and trembling with fear, addressed him in broken accents, and bowed down terrified before him.

ARJUNA:

"The universe, O Hrishekesha, is justly delighted with thy glory and is filled with zeal for thy service; the evil spirits are affrighted and flee on all sides, while all the hosts of saints bow down in adoration before thee. And wherefore should they not adore thee, O mighty Being, thou who art greater than Brahmâ, who art the first Maker? O eternal God of gods! O habitation of the universe! Thou art the one indivisible Being, and non-being, that which is supreme. Thou art the first of Gods, the most ancient Spirit; thou art the final supreme receptacle[81] of this universe; thou art the Knower and that which is to be known, and the supreme mansion; and by thee, O thou of infinite form, is this universe caused to emanate. Thou art Vayu, God of wind, Agni, god of fire, Yama, god of death, Varuna, God of waters; thou art the moon; Prajapati, the progenitor and grandfather, art thou. Hail! hail to thee! Hail to thee a thousand times repeated! Again and again hail to thee! Hail to thee! Hail to thee from before! Hail to thee from behind! Hail to thee on all sides, O thou All! Infinite is thy power and might; thou includest all things, therefore thou art all things!

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[78] Arjuna was a famous archer who could use the celestial bow, Gandiva, with either hand equally well.

[79] Arjuna wore a brilliant tiara.

[80] Krishna, by other names.

[81] That is, that into which the universe is resolved on the final dissolution.

"Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee 'O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend,' and blinded by my affection and presumption, I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this I beseech thee, O inconceivable Being, to forgive.

"Thou art the father of all things animate and inanimate; thou art to be honored as above the *guru* himself, and worthy to be adored; there is none equal to thee, and how in the triple worlds could there be thy superior, O thou of unrivalled power? Therefore I bow down and with my body prostrate, I implore thee, O Lord, for mercy. Forgive, O Lord, as the friend forgives the friend, as the father pardons his son, as the lover the beloved. I am well pleased with having beheld what was never before seen, and yet my heart is overwhelmed with awe; have mercy then, O God; show me that other form, O thou who art the dwelling-place of the universe; I desire to see thee as before with thy diadem on thy head, thy hands armed with mace and chakra; assume again, O thou of a thousand arms and universal form, thy four-armed shape!"[82]

KRISHNA:

"Out of kindness to thee, O Arjuna, by my divine power I have shown thee my supreme form, the universe, resplendent, infinite, primeval, and which has never been beheld by any other than thee. Neither by studying the *Vedas,* nor by alms-giving, nor by sacrificial rites, nor by deeds, nor by the severest mortification of the flesh can I be seen in this form by any other than thee, O best of Kurus. Having beheld my form thus awful, be not disturbed nor let thy faculties be confounded, but with fears allayed and happiness of heart look upon this other form of mine again."

[82] Arjuna had been accustomed to see Krishna in his four-armed form, not only in the images shown in youth, but also when Krishna came into incarnation, and could therefore look on the four-armed form without fear.

SANJAYA: Vasudeva[83] having so spoken reassumed his natural form; and thus in milder shape the Great One presently assuaged the fears of the terrified Arjuna.

ARJUNA:

"Now that I see again thy placid human shape, O Janardana, who art prayed to by mortals, my mind is no more disturbed and I am self-possessed."

KRISHNA:

"Thou hast seen this form of mine which is difficult to be perceived and which even the gods are always anxious to behold. But I am not to be seen, even as I have shown myself to thee, by study of the *Vedas*, nor by mortifications, nor alms-giving, nor sacrifices. I am to be approached and seen and known in truth by means of that devotion which has me alone as the object. He whose actions are for me alone, who esteemeth me the supreme goal, who is my servant only, without attachment to the results of action and free from enmity towards any creature, cometh to me, O son of Pandu."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Eleventh Chapter, by name –

VISION OF THE DIVINE FORM AS INCLUDING ALL FORMS.

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[83] A name of Krishna.

CHAPTER XII
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF FAITH

ARJUNA:

"Among those of thy devotees who always thus worship thee,[84] which take the better way, those who worship the indivisible and unmanifested, or those who serve thee as thou now art?"

KRISHNA:

"Those who worship me with constant zeal, with the highest faith and minds placed on me, are held in high esteem by me. But those who, with minds equal toward everything, with senses and organs restrained, and rejoicing in the good of all creatures, meditate on the inexhaustible, immovable, highest, incorruptible, difficult to contemplate, invisible, omnipresent, unthinkable, the witness, undemonstrable, shall also come unto me. For those whose hearts are fixed on the unmanifested the labor is greater, because the path which is not manifest is with difficulty attained by corporeal beings.[85] But for those who worship me, renouncing in me all their actions, regarding me as the supreme goal and meditating on me alone, if their thoughts are turned to me, O son of Pritha, I presently become the savior from this ocean of incarnations and death. Place, then, thy heart on me, penetrate me with thy understanding, and thou shalt without doubt hereafter dwell in me. But if thou shouldst be unable at once steadfastly to fix thy heart and mind on me, strive then, O Dhananjaya, to find me by constant practice in devotion. If after constant practice, thou art still unable, follow me by actions performed for me;[86] for by

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[84] That is, as described at the end of Chapter XI.

[85] The difficulty here stated is that caused by the personality, which causes us to see the Supreme as different and separate from ourselves.

[86] The works referred to here are special works of all kinds performed for the sake of the Supreme Being, which will have their effect upon the performer in future lives.

doing works for me thou shalt attain perfection. But if thou art unequal even to this, then, being self-restrained, place all thy works, failures and successes alike, on me, abandoning in me the fruit of every action. For knowledge is better than constant practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation; final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation.

"My devotee who is free from enmity, well-disposed towards all creatures, merciful, wholly exempt from pride and selfishness, the same in pain and pleasure, patient of wrongs, contented, constantly devout, self-governed, firm in resolves, and whose mind and heart are fixed on me alone, is dear unto me. He also is my beloved of whom mankind is not afraid and who has no fear of man; who is free from joy, from despondency and the dread of harm. My devotee who is unexpecting,[87] pure, just, impartial, devoid of fear, and who hath forsaken interest in the results of action, is dear unto me. He also is worthy of my love who neither rejoiceth nor findeth fault, who neither lamenteth nor coveteth, and being my servant hath forsaken interest in both good and evil results. He also is my beloved servant who is equal-minded to friend or foe, the same in honor and dishonor, in cold and heat, in pain and pleasure, and is unsolicitous about the event of things; to whom praise and blame are as one; who is of little speech, content with whatever cometh to pass, who hath no fixed habitation, and whose heart, full of devotion, is firmly fixed. But those who seek this sacred ambrosia – the religion of immortality – even as I have explained it, full of faith, intent on me above all others, and united to devotion, are my most beloved."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Twelfth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF FAITH.

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[87] In the original this reads as "not peering about."

CHAPTER XIII
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE KSHETRA FROM KSHETRAJNA

KRISHNA:

"This perishable body, O son of Kuntî, is known as Kshetra; those who are acquainted with the true nature of things call the soul who knows it, the Kshetrajna. Know also that I am the Knower in every mortal body, O son of Bharata; that knowledge which through the soul is a realization of both the known and the knower is alone esteemed by me as wisdom. What the Kshetra or body is, what it resembleth, what it produceth, and what is its origin, and also who he is who, dwelling within, knoweth it, as well as what is his power, learn all in brief from me. It has been manifoldly sung by the Rishees with discrimination and with arguments in the various Vedic hymns which treat of Brahmâ.

"This body, then, is made up of the great elements, *Ahankara* – egotism, *Buddhi* – intellect or judgment, the unmanifest, invisible spirit; the ten centers of action, the mind, and the five objects of sense; desire, aversion, pleasure and pain, persistency of life, and firmness, the power of cohesion. Thus I have made known unto thee what the Kshetra or body is with its component parts.

"True wisdom of a spiritual kind is freedom from self-esteem, hypocrisy, and injury to others; it is patience, sincerity, respect for spiritual instructors, purity, firmness, self-restraint, dispassion for objects of sense, freedom from pride, and a meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness, and error; it is an exemption from self-identifying attachment for children, wife, and household, and a constant unwavering steadiness of heart upon the arrival of every event whether favorable or unfavorable; it is a never-ceasing love for me alone, the self being effaced, and worship paid in a solitary spot, and a want of pleasure in congregations of men; it is a resolute

continuance in the study of Adhyâtma, the Superior spirit, and a meditation upon the end of the acquirement of a knowledge of truth – this is called wisdom or spiritual knowledge; its opposite is ignorance.

"I will now tell thee what is the object of wisdom, from knowing which a man enjoys immortality; it is that which has no beginning, even the supreme Brahmâ, and of which it cannot be said that it is either Being or Non-Being. It has hands and feet in all directions; eyes, heads, mouths, and ears in every direction; it is immanent in the world, possessing the vast whole. Itself without organs, it is reflected by all the senses and faculties; unattached, yet supporting all; without qualities, yet the witness of them all. It is within and without all creatures animate and inanimate; it is inconceivable because of its subtlety, and although near it is afar off. Although undivided it appeareth as divided among creatures, and while it sustains existing things, it is also to be known as their destroyer and creator. It is the light of all lights, and is declared to be beyond all darkness; and it is wisdom itself, the object of wisdom, and that which is to be obtained by wisdom; in the hearts of all it ever presideth. Thus hath been briefly declared what is the perishable body, and wisdom itself, together with the object of wisdom; he, my devotee, who thus in truth conceiveth me, obtaineth my state.

"Know that *prakriti* or nature, and *Purusha* the spirit, are without beginning. And know that the passions and the three qualities are sprung from nature. Nature or *prakriti* is said to be that which operates in producing cause and effect in actions;[88] individual spirit or *Purusha* is said to be the cause of experiencing pain and pleasure.[89] For spirit when invested with matter or *prakriti* experienceth the qualities which proceed from *prakriti*; its connection with these qualities is the cause of

[88] *Prakriti*, matter or nature, is the cause of all action throughout the universe, as it is the basis by which action may take place; and herein are included all actions, whether of men, of gods, powers, or what not.

[89] *Purusha* is the aspect of the individual spirit in every human breast; it is the cause of our experiencing pain and pleasure through the connection with nature found in the body.

its rebirth in good and evil wombs.[90] The spirit in the body is called *Maheswara*, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the *Paramâtma*, the highest soul. He who thus knoweth the spirit and nature, together with the qualities, whatever mode of life he may lead, is not born again on this earth.

"Some men by meditation, using contemplation upon the Self, behold the spirit within, others attain to that end by philosophical study with its realization, and others by means of the religion of works. Others, again, who are not acquainted with it in this manner, but have heard it from others, cleave unto and respect it; and even these, if assiduous only upon tradition and attentive to hearing the scriptures, pass beyond the gulf of death.[91]

"Know, O chief of the Bharatas, that whenever anything, whether animate or inanimate, is produced, it is due to the union of the Kshetra and Kshetrajna – body and the soul. He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed. Perceiving the same Lord present in everything and everywhere, he does not by the lower self destroy his own soul, but goeth to the supreme end. He who seeth that all his actions are performed by nature only, and that the self within is not the actor, sees indeed. And when he realizes perfectly that all things whatsoever in nature are comprehended in the ONE, he attains to the Supreme Spirit. This Supreme Spirit, O son of Kuntî, even when it is in the body, neither acteth nor is it affected by action, because, being without beginning and devoid of attributes, it is changeless. As the all-moving Akâsa by reason of its subtlety passeth everywhere unaffected, so the Spirit, though present in every kind of body, is not attached to action nor affected. As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine every body, O son of Bharata. Those who with the eye of wisdom thus perceive what is the difference between the

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[90] Here *purusha* is the persisting individuality which connects all reincarnations, as if it were the thread, and has hence been called the "thread Soul."

[91] This last sentence means that they thus lay such a foundation as that in subsequent lives they will reach the other states and then to immortality.

body and Spirit and the destruction of the illusion of objects,[92] go to the supreme."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Thirteenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE KSHETRA FROM KSHETRAJNA.

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[92] This refers to what has previously been said about the great illusion produced by nature in causing us to see objects as different from Spirit, and it agrees with Patanjali, who says that, although the perfectly illuminated being has destroyed the illusion, it still has a hold upon those who are not illuminated – they will have to go through repeated rebirths until their time of deliverance also comes.

CHAPTER XIV
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SEPARATION FROM THE THREE QUALITIES

KRISHNA:

"I will explain further the sublime spiritual knowledge superior to all others, by knowing which all the sages have attained to supreme perfection on the dissolution of this body. They take sanctuary in this wisdom, and having attained to my state they are not born again even at the new evolution, nor are they disturbed at the time of general destruction.

"The great Brahmâ is my womb in which I place the seed; from that, O son of Bharata, is the production of all existing things.[93] this great Brahmâ is the womb for all those various forms which are produced from any womb, and I am the Father who provideth the seed. The three great qualities called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* – light or truth, passion or desire, and indifference or darkness – are born from nature, and bind the imperishable soul to body, O thou of mighty arms. Of these the *sattva* quality by reason of its lucidity and peacefulness entwineth the soul to rebirth through attachment to knowledge and that which is pleasant. Know that *rajas* is of the nature of desire, producing thirst and propensity; it, O son of Kuntî, imprisoneth the Ego through the consequences produced from action. The quality of *tamas*, the offspring of the indifference in nature, is the deluder of all creatures, O son of Bharata; it imprisoneth the Ego in a body through heedless folly, sleep, and idleness. The *sattva* quality attaches the soul through happiness and pleasure, the *rajas* through action, and *tamas* quality surrounding the power of judgment with indifference attaches the soul through heedlessness.

"When, O son of Bharata, the qualities of *tamas* and *rajas* are overcome, then that of *sattva* prevaileth; *tamas* is chiefly acting when

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[93] In this verse *Brahmâ* is to be taken as *prakriti*, or nature.

sattva and *rajas* are hidden; and when the *sattva* and *tamas* diminish, then *rajas* prevaileth. When wisdom, the bright light, shall become evident at every gate of the body, then one may know that the *sattva* quality is prevalent within. The love of gain, activity in action, and the initiating of works, restlessness and inordinate desire are produced when the quality of *rajas* is prevalent, whilst the tokens of the predominance of the *tamas* quality are absence of illumination, the presence of idleness, heedlessness, and delusion, O son of Kuntî.

"If the body is dissolved when the *sattva* quality prevails, the self within proceeds to the spotless spheres of those who are acquainted with the highest place. When the body is dissolved while the quality of *rajas* is predominant, the soul is born again in a body attached to action; and so also of one who dies while *tamas* quality is prevalent, the soul is born again in the wombs of those who are deluded.

"The fruit of righteous acts is called pure and holy, appertaining to *sattva*; from *rajas* is gathered fruit in pain, and the *tamas* produceth only senselessness, ignorance, and indifference. From *sattva* wisdom is produced, from *rajas* desire, from *tamas* ignorance, delusion and folly. Those in whom the *sattva* quality is established mount on high, those who are full of *rajas* remain in the middle sphere, the world of men, while those who are overborne by the gloomy quality, *tamas*, sink below. But when the wise man perceiveth that the only agents of action are these qualities, and comprehends that which is superior to the qualities, he attains to my state. And when the embodied self surpasseth these three qualities of goodness, action, and indifference – which are coëxistent with the body it is released from rebirth and death, old age and pain, and drinketh of the water of immortality."

ARJUNA:

"What are the characteristic marks by which the man may be known, O Master, who hath surpassed the three qualities? What is his course of life, and what are the means by which he overcometh the qualities?"

KRISHNA:

"He, O son of Pandu, who doth not hate these qualities – illumination, action, and delusion – when they appear, nor longeth for them when they disappear; who, like one who is of no party, sitteth as one unconcerned about the three qualities and undisturbed by them, who being persuaded that the qualities exist, is moved not by them; who is of equal mind in pain and pleasure, self-centered, to whom a lump of earth, a stone, or gold are as one; who is of equal mind with those who love or dislike, constant, the same whether blamed or praised; equally minded in honor and disgrace, and the same toward friendly or unfriendly side, engaging only in necessary actions, such an one hath surmounted the qualities. And he, my servant, who worships me with exclusive devotion, having completely overcome the qualities, is fitted to be absorbed in Brahmâ the Supreme. I am the embodiment of the Supreme Ruler, and of the incorruptible, of the unmodifying, and of the eternal law, and of endless bliss."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Fourteenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SEPARATION FROM THE THREE QUALITIES.

CHAPTER XV
DEVOTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT

KRISHNA:

"Men say that the *Ashwattha*, the eternal sacred tree,[94] grows with its roots above and its branches below, and the leaves of which are the *Vedas*; he who knows this knows the *Vedas*. Its branches growing out of the three qualities[95] with the objects of sense as the lesser shoots, spread forth, some above and some below; and those roots which ramify below in the regions of mankind are the connecting bonds of action. Its form is not thus understood by men; it has no beginning, nor can its present constitution be understood,[96] nor has it any end. When one hath hewn down with the strong axe of dispassion this *Ashwattha* tree with its deeply imbedded roots, then that place is to be sought after from which those who there take refuge never more return to rebirth, for it[97] is the Primeval Spirit from which floweth the never-ending stream of conditioned existence. Those who are free from pride of self and whose discrimination is perfected, who have prevailed over the fault of attachment to action, who are constantly employed in devotion to meditation upon the Supreme Spirit, who have renounced desire and are free from the influence of the opposites known as pleasure and pain, are undeluded, and proceed to that place which endureth forever. Neither the sun nor the moon nor the fire enlighteneth that place; from it there is no return; it is my supreme abode.

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[94] This is a symbol for the universe, which, although apparently destroyed and then again renovated, is never ending, for it is the same as the Evolutionary Stream.

[95] See preceding Chapter.

[96] This means that the bound Ego cannot understand it.

[97] It is the place of the Supreme.

"It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again. And those are carried by the Sovereign Lord to and from whatever body he enters or quits, even as the breeze bears the fragrance from the flower. Presiding over the eye, the ear, the touch, the taste, and the power of smelling, and also over the mind, he experienceth the objects of sense. The deluded do not see the spirit when it quitteth or remains in the body, nor when, moved by the qualities, it has experience in the world. But those who have the eye of wisdom perceive it, and devotees who industriously strive to do so see it dwelling in their own hearts; whilst those who have not overcome themselves, who are devoid of discrimination, see it not even though they strive, thereafter. Know that the brilliance of the sun which illuminateth the whole world, and the light which is in the moon and in the fire, are the splendor of myself. I enter the earth supporting all living things by my power, and I am that property of sap which is taste, nourishing all the herbs and plants of the field. Becoming the internal fire of the living, I associate with the upward and downward breathing, and cause the four kinds of food to digest. I am in the hearts of all men, and from me come memory, knowledge, and also the loss of both. I am to be known by all the *Vedas*; I am he who is the author of the Vedanta, and I alone am the interpreter of the *Vedas*.

"There are two kinds of beings in the world, the one divisible, the other indivisible; the divisible is all things and the creatures, the indivisible is called Kûtastha, or he who standeth on high unaffected. But there is another spirit designated as the Supreme Spirit – Paramâtma – which permeates and sustains the three worlds. As I am above the divisible and also superior to the indivisible, therefore both in the world and in the *Vedas* am I known as the Supreme Spirit. He who being not deluded knoweth me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knoweth all things and worships me under every form and condition.

"Thus, O sinless one, have I declared unto thee this most sacred science; he who understandeth it, O son of Bharata, will be a wise man and the performer of all that is to be done."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Fifteenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT.

CHAPTER XVI
DEVOTION THROUGH DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN GODLIKE AND DEMONIACAL NATURES

KRISHNA:

"Fearlessness, sincerity, assiduity in devotion, generosity, self-restraint, piety, and alms-givings, study, mortification, and rectitude; harmlessness, veracity, and freedom from anger, resignation, equanimity, and not speaking of the faults of others, universal compassion, modesty, and mildness; patience, power, fortitude, and purity, discretion, dignity, unrevengefulness, and freedom from conceit – these are the marks of him whose virtues are of a godlike character, O son of Bharata. Those, O son of Pritha, who are born with demoniacal dispositions are marked by hypocrisy, pride, anger, presumption, harshness of speech, and ignorance. The destiny of those whose attributes are godlike is final liberation, while those of demoniacal dispositions, born to the Asuras' lot, suffer continued bondage to mortal birth; grieve not, O son of Pandu, for thou art born with the divine destiny. There are two kinds of natures in beings in this world, that which is godlike, and the other which is demoniacal; the godlike hath been fully declared, hear now from me, O son of Pritha, what the demoniacal is.

"Those who are born with the demoniacal disposition – of the nature of the Asuras – know not the nature of action nor of cessation from action, they know not purity nor right behavior, they possess no truthfulness. They deny that the universe has any truth in it, saying it is not governed by law, declaring that it hath no Spirit; they say creatures are produced alone through the union of the sexes, and that all is for enjoyment only. Maintaining this view, their souls being ruined, their minds contracted, with natures perverted, enemies of the world, they are born to destroy. They indulge insatiable desires, are full of hypocrisy, fast-fixed in false beliefs through their delusions.

They indulge in unlimited reflections which end only in annihilation, convinced until death that the enjoyment of the objects of their desires is the supreme good. Fast-bound by the hundred chords of desire, prone to lust and anger, they seek by injustice and the accumulation of wealth for the gratification of their own lusts and appetites. 'This to-day hath been acquired by me, and that object of my heart I shall obtain; this wealth I have, and that also shall be mine. This foe have I already slain, and others will I forthwith vanquish; I am the lord, I am powerful, and I am happy. I am rich and with precedence among men; where is there another like unto me? I shall make sacrifices, give alms, and enjoy.' In this manner do those speak who are deluded. Confounded by all manner of desires, entangled in the net of delusion, firmly attached to the gratification of their desires, they descend into hell. Esteeming themselves very highly, self-willed, full of pride and ever in pursuit of riches, they perform worship with hypocrisy and not even according to ritual,[98] but only for outward show. Indulging in pride, selfishness, ostentation, power, lust, and anger, they detest me who am in their bodies and in the bodies of others. Wherefore I continually hurl these cruel haters, the lowest of men, into wombs of an infernal nature in this world of rebirth. And they being doomed to those infernal wombs, more and more deluded in each succeeding rebirth, never come to me, O son of Kuntî, but go at length to the lowest region. [99]

"The gates of hell are three – desire, anger, covetousness, which destroy the soul; wherefore one should abandon them. Being free from these three gates of hell, O son of Kuntî, a man worketh for the salvation of his soul, and thus proceeds to the highest path. He who abandoneth the ordinances of the Scriptures to follow the dictates of his own desires, attaineth neither perfection nor happiness nor the highest path. Therefore, in deciding what is fit and what unfit to be

[98] This refers to the irregular performance of Vedic sacrifices by those who are without the right spiritual gifts, and only wish to imitate ostentatiously the right performance.

[99] This is final annihilation of those who deny their own soul and thus lose it. It is worse than the hell before spoken of for there is no return.

done, thou shouldst perform actions on earth with a knowledge of what is declared in Holy Writ."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Sixteenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION THROUGH DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN GODLIKE AND DEMONIACAL NATURES.

CHAPTER XVII
DEVOTION AS REGARDS THE THREE KINDS OF FAITH

ARJUNA:

"What is the state of those men who, while they neglect the precepts of the Scriptures, yet worship in faith, O Krishna? Is it of the *sattva*, the *rajas*, or the *tamas* quality?"

KRISHNA:

"The faith of mortals is of three kinds, and is born from their own disposition; it is of the quality of truth – *sattva*, action – *rajas*, and indifference – *tamas*; hear now what those are.

"The faith of each one, O son of Bharata, proceeds from the *sattva* quality; the embodied soul being gifted with faith, each man is of the same nature as that ideal on which his faith is fixed. Those who are of the disposition which ariseth from the prevalence of the *sattva* or good quality worship the gods; those of the quality of *rajas* worship the celestial powers, the Yakshas and Râkshasas; other men in whom the dark quality of indifference or *tamas* predominates worship elemental powers and the ghosts of dead men. Those who practice severe self-mortification not enjoined in the Scriptures are full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for what is past and desiring more to come. They, full of delusion, torture the powers and faculties which are in the body, and me also, who am in the recesses of the innermost heart; know that they are of an infernal tendency.

"Know that food which is pleasant to each one, as also sacrifices, mortification, and almsgiving, are of three kinds; hear what their divisions are. The food which increases the length of days, vigor and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind, and contented, and which is savory, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body, is that which is attractive to those in whom the *sattva* quality prevaileth. The food which is liked by those of the *rajas*

quality is over bitter, too acid, excessively salt, hot, pungent, dry and burning, and causeth unpleasantness, pain, and disease. Whatever food is such as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless or rotting, that is impure, is that which is preferred by those in whom predominates the quality of *tamas* or indifference.

"The sacrifice or worship which is directed by Scripture and is performed by those who expect no reward but who are convinced that it is necessary to be done, is of the quality of light, of goodness, of *sattva*. But know that that worship or sacrifice which is performed with a view to its results, and also for an ostentation of piety, belongs to passion, the quality of *rajas*, O best of the Bharatas. But that which is not according to the precepts of Holy Writ, without distribution of bread, without sacred hymns, without gifts to brahmans at the conclusion, and without faith, is of the quality of *tamas*.

"Honoring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers, and the wise, purity, rectitude, chastity, and harmlessness are called mortification of the body. Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech. Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind. This threefold mortification or austerity practiced with supreme faith and by those who long not for a reward is of the *sattva* quality.

"But that austerity which is practiced with hypocrisy, for the sake of obtaining respect for oneself or for fame or favor, and which is uncertain and belonging wholly to this world, is of the quality of *rajas*. Those austerities which are practiced merely by wounding oneself or from a false judgment or for the hurting of another are of the quality of *tamas*. Those gifts which are bestowed at the proper time to the proper person, and by men who are not desirous of a return, are of the *sattva* quality, good and of the nature of truth. But that gift which is given with the expectation of a return from the beneficiary or with a view to spiritual benefit flowing therefrom or with reluctance, is of the *rajas* quality, bad and partaketh of untruth. Gifts given out of place and season and to unworthy persons, without proper attention and scornfully, are of the *tamas* quality, wholly bad and of the nature of darkness.

"OM TAT SAT, these are said to be the threefold designation of the Supreme Being. By these in the beginning were sanctified the knowers of Brahmâ,[100] the *Vedas,* and sacrifices. Therefore the sacrifices, the giving of alms, and the practicing of austerities are always, among those who expound Holy Writ, preceded by the word OM. Among those who long for immortality and who do not consider the reward for their actions, the word TAT precedes their rites of sacrifice, their austerities, and giving of alms. The word SAT is used for qualities that are true and holy, and likewise is applied to laudable actions, O son of Pritha. The state of mental sacrifice when actions are at rest is also called SAT. Whatever is done without faith, whether it be sacrifice, alms-giving, or austerities, is called ASAT, that which is devoid of truth and goodness, O son of Pritha, and is not of any benefit either in this life or after death."

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Seventeenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION AS REGARDS THE THREE KINDS OF FAITH.

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[100] It reads "Brahmanas," and does not seem to refer to any caste.

CHAPTER XVIII
DEVOTION AS REGARDS RENUNCIATION AND FINAL LIBERATION

ARJUNA:

"I wish to learn, O great-armed one, the nature of abstaining from action and of the giving up of the results of action, and also the difference between these two, O slayer of Keshin."[101]

KRISHNA:

"The bards conceive that the forsaking of actions which have a desired object is renunciation or Sannyasa; the wise call the disregard of the fruit of every action true disinterestedness in action. By some wise men it is said, 'Every action is as much to be avoided as a crime,' while by others it is declared, 'Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity should not be forsaken.' Among these divided opinions hear my certain decision, O best of the Bharatas, upon this matter of disinterested forsaking, which is declared to be of three kinds, O chief of men. Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise. But even those works are to be performed after having renounced all selfish interest in them and in their fruits; this, O son of Pritha, is my ultimate and supreme decision. The abstention from works which are necessary and obligatory is improper; the not doing of such actions is due to delusion springing from the quality of *tamas*. The refraining from works because they are painful and from the dread of annoyance ariseth from the quality of *rajas* which belongs to passion, and he who thus leaves undone what he ought to do shall not obtain the fruit which comes from right forsaking. The work which is performed, O Arjuna, because it is necessary, obligatory, and proper, with all self-interest therein put aside and attachment to the action

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[101] Keshin was a daitya, a demon, fabled to have been sent by Kansa for the purpose of destroying Krishna.

absent, is declared to be of the quality of truth and goodness which is known as *sattva*. The true renouncer, full of the quality of goodness, wise and exempt from all doubt, is averse neither to those works which fail nor those which succeed. It is impossible for mortals to utterly abandon actions; but he who gives up the results of action is the true renouncer. The threefold results of action – unwished for, wished for, and mixed – accrue after death to those who do not practice this renunciation, but no results follow those who perfectly renounce. [102]

"Learn, O great-armed one, that for the accomplishment of every work five agents are necessary, as is declared. These are the substratum, the agent, the various sorts of organs, the various and distinct movements and with these, as fifth, the presiding deities. These five agents are included in the performance of every act which a man undertaketh, whether with his body, his speech, or his mind. This being thus, whoever because of the imperfection of his mind beholdeth the real self as the agent thinketh wrongly and seeth not aright. He whose nature is free from egotism and whose power of discrimination is not blinded does not slay though he killeth all these people, and is not bound by the bonds of action. The three causes which incite to action are knowledge, the thing to be known, and the knower, and threefold also is the totality of the action in the act, the instrument, and the agent. Knowledge, the act, and the agent are also distinguished in three ways according to the three qualities; listen to their enumeration after that classification.

"Know that the wisdom which perceives in all nature one single principle, indivisible and incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen, is of the *sattva* quality. The knowledge which perceives different and manifold principles as present in the world of created beings pertains to *rajas*, the quality of passion. But that knowledge, wholly without value, which is mean, attached to one object alone as if it were the whole, which does not see the true cause of existence, is of the nature of *tamas*, indifferent and dark.

"The action which is right to be done, performed without attachment to results, free from pride and selfishness, is of the *sattva*

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[102] This verse refers not only to effects after death in the post-mortem states, but also to subsequent lives in the body upon reincarnating.

quality. That one is of the *rajas* quality which is done with a view to its consequences, or with great exertion, or with egotism. And that which in consequence of delusion is undertaken without regard to its consequences, or the power to carry it out, or the harm it may cause, is of the quality of darkness – *tamas*.

"The doer who performs necessary actions unattached to their consequences and without love or hatred is of the nature of the quality of truth – *sattva*. The doer whose actions are performed with attachment to the result, with great exertion, for the gratification of his lusts and with pride, covetousness, uncleanness, and attended with rejoicing and grieving, is of the quality of *rajas* – passion and desire. The doer who is ignorant, foolish, undertaking actions without ability, without discrimination, with sloth, deceit, obstinacy, mischievousness, and dilatoriness, is of the quality of *tamas*.

Hear now, O Dhananjaya, conqueror of wealth, the differences which I shall now explain in the discerning power[103] and the steadfast power within, according to the three classes flowing from the divisions of the three qualities. The discerning power that knows how to begin and to renounce, what should and what should not be done, what is to be feared and what not, what holds fast and what sets the soul free, is of the *sattva* quality. That discernment, O son of Pritha, which does not fully know what ought to be done and what not, what should be feared and what not, is of the passion-born *rajas* quality. That discriminating power which is enveloped in obscurity, mistaking wrong for right and all things contrary to their true intent and meaning, is of the dark quality of *tamas*.

"That power of steadfastness holding the man together, which by devotion controls every motion of the mind, the breath, the senses and the organs, partaketh of the *sattva* quality. And that which cherisheth duty, pleasure, and wealth, in him who looketh to the fruits of action is of the quality of *rajas*. But that through which the man of low capacity stays fast in drowsiness, fear, greed, vanity and rashness is from the *tamas* quality, O son of Pritha.

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[103] This is *Buddhi*, the highest intellection, the power of judgment.

"Now hear what are the three kinds of pleasure wherein happiness comes from habitude and pain is ended. That which in the beginning is as poison and in the end as the water of life, and which arises from a purified understanding, is declared to be of the *sattva* quality. That arising from the connection of the senses with their objects which in the beginning is sweet as the waters of life but at the end like poison, is of the quality of *rajas*. That pleasure is of the dark *tamas* quality which both in the beginning and the end arising from sleep, idleness, and carelessness, tendeth both in the beginning and the end to stupify the soul. There is no creature on earth nor among the hosts in heaven who is free from these three qualities which arise from nature.

"The respective duties of the four castes: Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sûdras, are also determined by the qualities which predominated in the disposition of each, O harasser of thy foes. The natural duty of a Brahman compriseth tranquility, purity, self-mastery, patience, rectitude, learning, spiritual discernment, and belief in the existence of another world. Those of the Kshatriya sprung from his nature, are valor, glory, strength, firmness, not to flee from the field of battle, liberality and a lordly character. The natural duties of the Vaisya are to till the land, tend cattle and to buy and sell; and that of the Sûdra is to serve, as is his natural disposition.

"Men being contented and devoted to their own proper duties attain perfection; hear now how that perfection is attained by devotion to natural duty.

"If a man maketh offering to the Supreme Being who is the source of the works of all and by whom this universe was spread abroad, he thus obtaineth perfection. The performance of the duties of a man's own particular calling, although devoid of excellence, is better than doing the duty of another, however well performed; and he who fulfills the duties obligated by nature, does not incur sin. A man's own natural duty, even though stained with faults, ought not to be abandoned. For all human acts are involved in faults, as the fire is wrapped in smoke. The highest perfection of freedom from action is attained through renunciation by him who in all works has an unfettered mind and subdued heart.

"Learn from me, in brief, in what manner the man who has reached perfection attains to the Supreme Spirit, which is the end, the aim, and highest condition of spiritual knowledge.

"Embued with pure discrimination, restraining himself with resolution, having rejected the charms of sound and other objects of the senses, and casting off attachment and dislike; dwelling in secluded places, eating little, with speech, body, and mind controlled, engaging in constant meditation and unwaveringly fixed in dispassion; abandoning egotism, arrogance, violence, vanity, desire, anger, pride, and possession, with calmness ever present, a man is fitted to be the Supreme Being. And having thus attained to the Supreme, he is serene, sorrowing no more, and no more desiring, but alike towards all creatures he attains to supreme devotion to me. By this devotion to me he knoweth fundamentally who and what I am and having thus discovered me he enters into me without any intermediate condition. And even the man who is always engaged in action shall attain by my favor to the eternal and incorruptible imperishable abode, if he puts his trust in me alone. With thy heart place all thy works on me, prefer me to all else, exercise mental devotion continually, and think constantly of me. By so doing thou shalt by my divine favor surmount every difficulty which surroundeth thee; but if from pride thou wilt not listen to my words, thou shalt undoubtedly be lost. And if, indulging self-confidence, thou sayest 'I will not fight,' such a determination will prove itself vain, for the principles of thy nature will impel thee to engage. Being bound by all past karma to thy natural duties, thou, O son of Kuntî, wilt involuntarily do from necessity that which in thy folly thou wouldst not do. There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master – *Ishwara* – who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of Bharata, with all thy soul; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place.

"Thus have I made known unto thee this knowledge which is a mystery more secret than secrecy itself; ponder it fully in thy mind; act as seemeth best unto thee.

"But further listen to my supreme and most mysterious words which I will now for thy good reveal unto thee because thou art dearly

beloved of me. Place thy heart upon me as I have declared myself to be, serve me, offer unto me alone, and bow down before me alone, and thou shalt come to me; I swear it, for thou art dear to me. Forsake every other religion and take refuge alone with me; grieve not, for I shall deliver thee from all transgressions. Thou must never reveal this to one who doth not practice mortification, who is without devotion, who careth not to hear it, nor unto him who despiseth me. He who expoundeth this supreme mystery to my worshippers shall come to me if he performs the highest worship of me; and there shall not be among men anyone who will better serve me than he, and he shall be dearest unto me of all on earth. If anyone shall study these sacred dialogues held between us two, I shall consider that I am worshipped by him with the sacrifice of knowledge; this is my resolve. And even the man who shall listen to it with faith and not reviling shall, being freed from evil, attain to the regions of happiness provided for those whose deeds are righteous.

"Hast thou heard all this, O son of Pritha, with mind one-pointed? Has the delusion of thought which arose from ignorance been removed, O Dhananjaya?"

ARJUNA:

"By thy divine power, O thou who fallest not,[104] my delusion is destroyed, I am collected once more; I am free from doubt, firm, and will act according to thy bidding."

SANJAYA:

Thus have I been an ear-witness of the miraculous astonishing dialogue, never heard before, between Vasudeva and the magnanimous son of Pritha. By the favor of Vyasa I heard this supreme mystery of *Yoga* – devotion – even as revealed from the mouth of Krishna himself who is the supreme Master of devotion. And as I again and again remember, O mighty king, this wonderful sacred dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, I am delighted again and again. Also, as I recall to my memory the wonderful form of Hari,[105] the Lord,

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[104] The word is "Achyuta".

[105] One of the names of Vishnu, and also applied to Krishna.

my astonishment is great, O king, and I rejoice again and again. Wherever Krishna, the supreme Master of devotion, and wherever the son of Pritha, the mighty archer, may be, there with certainty are fortune, victory, wealth, and wise action; this is my belief.

Thus in the *Upanishads*, called the holy *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*, in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the book of devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the Eighteenth Chapter, by name –

DEVOTION AS REGARDS RENUNCIATION AND FINAL LIBERATION.

END OF THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

NOTES ON THE BAGHAVAD-GITA

The First Seven Chapters

by William Q. Judge

The Remaining Chapters

by Robert Crosbie

PREFACE

This collection of "*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*" is an invaluable aid to the study of the *Gita* itself. The book was originally published by The United Lodge of Theosophists between November, 1913 through February, 1917. The *Notes* on chapters One through Seven were written by William Q. Judge and were first printed in his magazine, *The Path*, from 1887 through 1895. Many of these chapters were signed with pen names used by Mr. Judge: "William Brehon, F. T. S." and "William Brehon", and in the footnotes, sometimes just "B". The *Notes* on the following eleven Chapters were written by Robert Crosbie, who was a student of Mr. Judge, and who later founded the United Lodge of Theosophists. Deep spiritual wisdom shines forth in abundance through the insightful comments of both Mr. Judge and Mr. Crosbie.

Editor, Theosophy Trust Books

CHAPTER I
THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

If the title of this sacred Hindu poem were paraphrased, it would read:

The Holy Song of God Himself, who, at the beginning of Kali yuga or the dark age, descended upon earth to aid and instruct Man.

GITA means song, and BHAGAVAD is one of the names of Krishna. Krishna was an *Avatar*. According to the views of the Brahmins, we are now in Kali-yuga began about the time of Krishna's appearance. He is said to have descended in order to start among men those moral and philosophical ideas which were necessary to be known during the revolution of the Age, at the end of which – after a brief period of darkness – a better Age will begin.

The composition of this poem is attributed to Vyasa and, as he is also said to have given the *Vedas* to men, a discussion about dates would not be profitable and can well stand over until some other occasion.

The *Bhagavad-Gita* is a portion of the *Mahabharata,* the great epic of India. The *Mahabharata* is so called because it contains the general history of the house of Bharat, and the prefix *Maha* signifies great. Its more definite object, however, is to give an account of the wars of the Kurus and Pandus, two great branches of the family. And that portion included in our poem is the sublime philosophical and metaphysical dialogue held by Krishna with Arjuna, on the eve of a battle between the two aspirants for dominion.

The scene of the battle is laid on the plain called "Kurukshetra", a strip of land near Delhi, between the Indus, the Ganges, and the Himalayan mountains. Many European translators and commentators, being ignorant of the psychological system of the Hindus – which really underlies every word of this poem – have regarded this plain and the battle as just those two things and no more; some have gone so far as to give the commercial products of the country at the supposed period, so that readers might be able, forsooth, in that way to know the

motives that prompted the two princes to enter into a bloody internecine conflict. No doubt such a conflict did take place, for man is continually imitating the higher spiritual planes; and a great sage could easily adopt a human event in order to erect a noble philosophical system upon such an allegorical foundation.

In one aspect history gives us merely the small or great occurrences of man's progress; but in another, any one great historical epoch will give us a picture of the evolution in man, in the mass, of any corresponding faculty of the Individual Soul. So we see, here and there, Western minds wondering why such a highly tuned metaphysical discussion should be "disfigured by a warfare of savages." Such is the materializing influence of Western culture that it is hardly able to admit any higher meaning in a portion of the poem which confessedly it has not yet come to fully understand.

Before the *Upanishads* can be properly rendered, the Indian psychological system must be understood; and even when its existence is admitted, the English speaking person will meet the great difficulty arising from an absence of words in that language which correspond to the ideas so frequently found in the Sanskrit. Thus we have to wait until a new set of words has been born to express the new ideas not yet existing in the civilization of the West.

The location of the plain on which this battle was fought is important, as well as are also the very rivers and mountains by which it is bounded. And as equally needful to be understood, or at least guessed at, are the names of the respective princes. The very place in the *Mahabharata* in which this episode is inserted has deep significance, and we cannot afford to ignore anything whatever that is connected with the events. If we merely imagine that Vyasa or Krishna took the sacred plain of Kurukshetra and the great battle as simply accessories to his discourse, which we can easily discard, the whole force of the dialogue will be lost. Although the *Bhagavad-Gita* is a small work, there have been written upon it, among the Hindus, more commentaries than those upon the *Revelation* of St. John among the Christians.

I do not intend to go into those commentaries, because on the one hand I am not a Sanskrit scholar, and on the other it would not tend to great profit. Many of them are fanciful, some unwarrantable; and those

that are of value can be consulted by anyone anxious to pursue that line of inquiry. What I propose here to myself and to all who may read these papers is to study the *Bhagavad-Gita* by the light of that spiritual lamp — be it small or great — which the Supreme Soul will feed and increase within us if we attend to its behests and diligently inquire after it. Such at least is the promise by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* – the "Song Celestial."

In the few introductory lines with which I took up this subject, it was stated that not being a Sanskrit scholar I did not intend to go into the commentaries upon the poem in that language. The great mass of those commentaries have looked at the dialogue from various standpoints. Many later Hindu students have not gone beyond the explanations made by Sankaracharya, and nearly all refuse to do more than transliterate the names of the different personages referred to in the first chapter.

But there is the highest authority for reading this poem between the lines. The *Vedas* themselves say that what we see of them is only "the disclosed Veda," and that one should strive to get above this *disclosed* word. It is here clearly implied that the undisclosed *Vedas* must be hidden or contained in that which is apparent to the outer senses. Did we not have this privilege, then surely would we be reduced to obtaining true knowledge solely from the facts of experience as suffered by the mortal frame, and fall into the gross error of the materialists who claim that mind is only an effect produced by the physical brain-molecules coming into motion. We would also have to follow the canonical rule, that conscience is a safe guide only when it is regulated by an external law such as the law of the church, or of the Brahmanical caste. But we very well know that within the material, apparent – or disclosed – man, exists the *real* one who is undisclosed.

This valuable privilege of looking for the inner sense, while not straining after impossible meanings in the text, is permitted to all sincere students of any holy scriptures, Christian or Pagan. And in the poem itself, Krishna declares that he will feed the lamp of spiritual wisdom so that the real meaning of his words may be known; so too

the *Upanishads* uphold the existence of a faculty together with the right to use it, whereby one can plainly discern the real, or undisclosed, meaning of holy books. Indeed, there is a school of occultists who hold, as we think with reason, that this power may be so developed by devoted persons, that even upon hearing the words of a holy book read in a totally unfamiliar language, the true meaning and drift of the strange sentences become instantly known.[106] The Christian commentators all allow that in studying their Bible the spirit must be attended to and not the letter. This *spirit* is that *undisclosed* Veda which must be looked for between the lines.

Nor should the Western student of the poem be deterred from any attempt to get at the real meaning by the attitude of the Brahmins, who hold that only Brahmins can be told this real meaning, and, because Krishna did not make it plain, it may not be made plain now to Sudras, or low caste people. Were this view to prevail, then the whole Western body of students would be excluded from using this important book, inasmuch as all persons not Hindus are necessarily of Sudra caste. Krishna did not make such an exclusion, which is only priestcraft. He was himself of shepherd caste and not a Brahmin; and he says that anyone who listens to his words will receive great benefit. The sole limitation made by him is that one in which he declares that these things must not be taught to those who do not want to listen, which is just the same direction as that given by Jesus of Nazareth when he said, "cast not your pearls before swine."

But as our minds work very much upon suggestion or clues and might, in the absence of any hints as to where those clues are placed, be liable to altogether overlook the point, we must bear in mind the existence among the Aryans of a psychological system that gives substance and impulse to utterances declared by many Orientalists to be folly unworthy of attention from a man of the nineteenth century civilization. Nor need we be repulsed from our task because of a small acquaintance with that Aryan psychology. The moment we are aware

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[106] We have in mind an incident where a person of some slight development in this direction, heard read several verses from the Vedas in Sanskrit – with which he had no acquaintance – and instantly told what the verses were about.

of its existence in the poem, our inner self is ready to help the outer man to grasp after it; and in the noble pursuit of these great philosophical and moral truths, which is only our eternal endeavor to realize them as a part of our being, we can patiently wait for a perfect knowledge of the anatomy and functions of the inner man.

Western Sanskritists have translated many important words into the very lowest of their real meanings, being drawn away from the true by the incomplete Western psychological and spiritual knowledge, or have mixed them up hopelessly. Such words as *karma* and *dharma* are not understood. *Dharma* means law, and is generally turned into duty, or said to refer merely to some rule depending upon human convention, whereas it means an inherent property of the faculties or of the whole man, or even of anything in the cosmos. Thus it is said that it is the duty, or *dharma*, of fire to burn. It always will burn and thus do its whole duty, having no consciousness, while man alone has the power to retard his "journey to the heart of the Sun," by refusing to perform his properly appointed and plainly evident *dharma*. So again, when we read in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that those who depart this life "in the bright half of the moon, in the six months of the sun's northern course," will go to eternal salvation, while others, "who depart in the gloomy night of the moon's dark season while the sun is in the southern half of his path," ascend for a time to the moon's region, to be reborn on this earth, our Orientalists tell us this is sheer folly, and we are unable to contradict them. But if we know that the Aryans, with a comprehensive knowledge of the vast and never inharmonious correspondence reigning throughout the macrocosm, in speaking thus meant to admit that the human being may be or not in a state of development in strict conformity to the bright or dark moon, the verse becomes clear. The materialistic critic will take the verse in the fourth chapter, which says that "he who eats of the ambrosia left from a sacrifice passes into the supreme spirit," and ask us how the eating of the remnants of a burnt offering can confer salvation. When, however, we know that Man is the altar and the sacrifice, and that this *ambrosia* is the *perfection of spiritual cultivation* which he eats or incorporates into his being, the Aryan is vindicated and we are saved from despair.

A strange similarity on one point may be noticed between our poem and the old Hebrew record. The Jews were prepared by certain experiences to enter into the promised land, but were unable to do so until they had engaged in mighty conflicts with Hivites, Jebusites, Perizzites, and Amalekites. Here we find that the very opening verse signalizes a war. The old, blind king Dhritarashtra asks his prime minister to tell him what these opposing forces of Pandus and Kurus have been doing assembled as they are resolved upon war. So too the Jews assembled upon the borders of the promised land, resolved on conflict, and sustained in their resolve by the declarations of their God who had brought them out of the darkness of Egypt, carried on the fight. Egypt was the place where they had, in mystic language, obtained corporification, and stands for antenatal states, for unformed chaotic periods in the beginning of evolution, for the gestation in the womb. We are on the eve of a gigantic combat, we are to rush into the midst of "a conflict of savages." If this opening verse is understood as it was meant, we are given the key to a magnificent system, and shall not fall into the error of asserting that the unity of the poem is destroyed.

Dhritarashtra is blind, because the body, as such, is blind in every way.

Someone has said – Goethe I think – that the old pagan religions taught man to look up, to aspire continually toward the greatness which was really his to achieve, and thus led him to regard himself as but little less, potentially, than a god; while the attitude of man under the Christian system is one of humility, of bowed head and lowered eyes, in the presence of his God. In approaching the "jealous God" of the Mosaic dispensation, it is not permissible to assume an erect position. This change of attitude becomes necessary as soon as we postulate a Deity who is outside and beyond us. And yet it is not due to the Christian scriptures in themselves, but solely to the wrong interpretation given them by priests and churches, and easily believed by a weak humanity that needs a support beyond itself on which to lean.

The Aryans, holding that man in his essence *is God,* naturally looked up to him and referred everything to him. They therefore attributed to the material of the body no power of sight or feeling. And

so Dhritarashtra, who is *material existence,* in which thirst for its renewal inheres, is blind.

The eye cannot see nor the ear hear, of themselves. In the *Upanishads* the pupil is asked: "What is the sight of the eye, and the hearing of the ear?" replying that these powers reside solely with inner organs of the soul, using the material body as the means for experiencing the phenomena of material life. Without the presence of this indwelling, informing, hearing and seeing power – or being – this collection of particles now deified as *body* is dead or blind.

These philosophers were not behind our nineteenth century. Boscovich, the Italian, Faraday, Fiske and other moderns, have concluded that we cannot even see or know the *matter* of which these bodies and the different substances about us are made up, and that the ultimate resolution is not into atoms finely divided, but into "points of dynamic force"; and therefore, we cannot know a piece of iron, we only know the *phenomena* it produces. This position is an ancient Aryan one, with another added – that the real perceiver of those phenomena is the *Self.*

It is only by an acceptance of this philosophy that we will ever comprehend the facts of nature which our science is so laboriously noting and classifying. But that science ignores a large mass of phenomena well known to spiritualists here and to ascetics in Asia, because the actual existence of the Self as the final support of every phase of consciousness is denied. "The disappearance of the ascetic is a possibility." But the West denies it, while it is doubtful if even spiritists will admit that any living man can cause that phenomenon known as "form" to disappear. They are, however, willing to grant that a "materialized spirit form" may disappear, or that some mediums are living who have disappeared while sitting in a chair, either as an actual dissipation of molecules or by being covered as with a veil. [107]

In those instances the thing happened without knowledge or effort on the part of the medium, who was a passive agent. But the Eastern ascetic, possessing the power of disappearing, is a person who has

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[107] For an instance see Olcott's "*People from the Other World*", respecting a female medium. – W.B.

meditated upon the real basis of what we know as "form," with the doctrine ever in view, as stated by Boscovich and Faraday, that these phenomena are not realities *per se*, and adding that all must be referred to the Self. And so we find Patanjali in his compilation of *yoga* aphorisms stating the matter. In his twenty-first aphorism Book III, he says that the ascetic being aware that form, as such, is nothing, can cause himself to disappear. [108] It is not difficult to explain this as a species of hypnotism or psychologizing performed by the ascetic. But such sort of explaining is only the modern method of getting out of a difficulty by stating it over again in new terms. Not until it is admitted that the Self eternally persists, and is always unmodified, will any real knowledge be acquired by us respecting these matters. In this Patanjali is very clear in his seventeenth aphorism, Book IV, where he says: "The modifications of the mental state are always known, because the presiding spirit is not modified."

We must admit the blindness of Dhritarashtra, as body, and that our consciousness and ability to know anything whatever of the modifications going on in the organism, are due to the "presiding spirit."

So this old, blind rajah is that part of man which, containing the principle of thirst for existence, holds material life. The Ganges bounding his plain on one side typifies the sacred stream of spiritual life incarnated here.

At first it flows down unperceived by us, through the spiritual spheres, coming at last into what we call matter, where it manifests itself but yet remains unseen, until at last it flows into the sea – or death – to be drawn up again by the sun – or the karma of reincarnation. The plain is sacred because it is the "temple of the Holy Ghost." Kurukshetra should then read: "The body which is acquired by karma." So the king does not ask what this body itself has been doing, but what have the followers of material existence, that is the entire host

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[108] The aphorism reads: "By performing Sanyama – restraint (or meditation) – about form, its power of being apprehended (by the seer's eye) being checked, and luminousness, the property of the organ of sight, having no connection with its object (that is the form), the result is the disappearance of the ascetic." – W.B.

of lower elements in man by which he is attached to physical life, and the followers of Pandu, that is the entire set of spiritual faculties, been doing on this sacred plain.

It follows then that the enumeration of generals and commanders gone into by the prime minister in reply to the king must be a catalogue of all the lower and higher faculties in man, containing also, in the names adopted, clues to powers of our being only at present dimly guessed at in the West or included in such vague terms as brain and mind. We find these generals given their appropriate places upon either side, and see also that they have assigned to them various distinctive weapons, which in many cases are flourished or exhibited in the preliminary movements, so that our attention may be drawn to them.

Salutation to Krishna! the Lord of Devotion, the God of Religion, the never failing help of those who trust in him.

We now have discovered that the poem is not disfigured by this account of a conflict that begins in the first chapter, to be then dropped while the two great actors retire to their chariot for a discussion. This description of forces, and the first effect on Arjuna of his survey, show us that we are now to learn from Krishna what is the duty of man in his warfare with all the forces and tendencies of his nature. Instead of the conflict being a blemish to the poem, it is a necessary and valuable portion. We see that the fight is to be fought by every human being, whether he lives in India or not, for it is raging on the sacred plain of our body. Each one of us, then, is Arjuna.

In the Sanskrit, the first chapter is called "Arjuna-Vishada," which in English means, "The despair and despondency of Arjuna." Some have called it "The Survey of Army"; but while truly an army is surveyed, that is not the essential meaning intended. It is the result of the survey we are to consider; and that result upon Arjuna who is the person most interested – the one who is the chief questioner and beneficiary throughout the whole action of the poem – is despondency.

The cause of this despondency is to be inquired into.

Arjuna, in the flush of determination, and before any analysis of either the consequences to himself or to others who might become involved, entered the conflict, after having chosen Krishna as his charioteer. The forces are drawn up in line of battle, and he rides out to survey them. At once he sees ranged against him relatives of every class, in their turn preparing to destroy others, their relatives, friends and acquaintances as well as Arjuna's, who are enlisted on his side. Turning to Krishna, he says that he cannot engage in such a war, that he perceives only evil omens, and that even if the opposers, being ignorant, may be willing to fight with such dreadful consequences in view, he cannot do so, but must give up the battle ere it is begun. Thereupon Arjuna, whose heart was troubled with grief, let fall his bow and arrows, and sat down on the bench of his chariot.

Every student of occultism, theosophy or true religion – all being the one thing – will go through Arjuna's experiences. Attracted by the beauty or other seductive quality, for him, of this study, he enters upon the prosecution of it, and soon discovers that he arouses two sets of forces. One of them consists of all his friends and relations who do not view life as he does, who are wedded to the "established order," and think him a fool for devoting any attention to anything else; while the general mass of his acquaintances and those whom he meets in the world instinctively array themselves against one who is thus starting upon a crusade that begins with his own follies and faults, but must end in a condemnation of theirs, if only by the force of example. The other opponents are far more difficult to meet, because they have their camp and base of action upon the Astral and other hidden planes; they are all his lower tendencies and faculties, that up to this time have been in the sole service of material life. By the mere force of moral gravity, they fly to the other side, where they assist his living friends and relatives in their struggle against him. They have more efficiency in producing despondency than anything else. In the poem, it is referred to in the words addressed by Arjuna to Krishna:

"I am not able to stand; for my understanding, as it were turneth round, and I behold inauspicious omens on all sides."

All of us are brought to this study by our own request made to our higher self, who is Krishna. Arjuna requested Krishna to be his charioteer, and to drive him forth between the two armies. It does not

matter whether he now is consciously aware of having made the request, nor whether it was made as a specific act, in this life or in many another precedent one; *it was made and it is to be answered at the right time.* Some of us have asked this many times before, in ancient births of ours in other bodies and other lands; others are making the request now; but it is more than likely in the case of those who are spurred on to intense effort and longing to know the truth, and to strive for unity with God, that they have put up the petition ages since. So now Krishna, the charioteer of this body with its horses – the mind – drives us forth so that we may stand with our higher self and all the tendencies connected with it on one side, and all the lower (but not all necessarily evil) principles on the other. The student may, perhaps, with ease face the crowd of friends and relatives, having probably gone through that experience in other lives and is now proof against it, but he is not proof against the first dark shadow of despair and ill result that falls upon him. Every elemental that he has vivified by evil thinking now casts upon him the thought, "After all, it is no use; I cannot win; if I did, the gain would be nothing; I can see no great or lasting result to be attained, for all, is impermanent."

This dreadful feeling is sure in each case to supervene, and we might as well be prepared for it. We cannot always live on the enthusiasm of heavenly joys. The rosy hue of dawn does not reach round the world; it chases darkness. Let us be prepared for it, not only at the first stage, but all along in our progress to the holy seat; for it comes at each pause; at that slight pause when we are about to begin another breath, to take another step, to pass into another condition.

And here it is wise, turning to the 18th, and last, chapter of the poem, to read the words of the immortal master of life:

"From a confidence in thine own self-sufficiency thou mayest think that thou wilt not fight. Such is a fallacious determination, *for the principles of thy nature will compel thee.* Being confined to actions by the duties of thy natural calling, *thou wilt involuntarily do that from necessity,* which thou wantest through ignorance to avoid. "

In this, Krishna uses the very argument advanced by Arjuna against the fight, as one in its favor. In the chapter we are considering, Arjuna repeats the old Brahmanical injunction against those who break up the

"eternal institutions of caste and tribe," for, as he says, the penalty annexed is a sojourn in hell, since, when the caste and tribe are destroyed, the ancestors, being deprived of the rites of funeral-cakes and libations of water [109], fall from heaven, and the whole tribe is thus lost. But Krishna shows, as above, that each man is naturally, by his bodily tendencies, compelled to do the acts of some particular calling, and that body with its tendencies is merely the manifestation of what the inner man is, as the result of all his former thoughts up to that incarnation. So he is forced by nature's law – which is his own – to be born just where he must have the experience that is needed. And Arjuna, being a warrior, is compelled to fight, whether he will or no. In another chapter, the institution of caste is more particularly referred to, and there we will have occasion to go into that subject with more detail.

As stated in the last paper, the substratum, or support, for the whole cosmos, is the presiding spirit, and all the various changes in life, whether of a material nature or solely in mental states, are cognizable because the presiding spirit within is not modifiable. Were it otherwise, then we would have no memory, for with each passing event, we, becoming merged in it, could not remember anything, that is, we would see no changes. There must therefore be something

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[109] This reference by Arjuna is to the immemorial custom of the son, or descendants, offering to the departed, at stated times, funeral-cakes and water, called "Sraddha and Pinda" – one of the so-called superstitions of the Hindus. It has always been a grave question with me whether the boasted "freedom from superstitions" of Western 19th century civilization is an unmixed good, or any evidence of real progress. All such ancient forms have been swept away, and with them nearly every vestige of true religious feeling, leaving only an unquenchable thirst for money and power. In the present ignorance of the true reason at the bottom of these forms, the assertion is made that they mean nothing whatever. But in the Catholic church it is continued, and to some extent believed in, as is shown in their masses for the dead; surely these masses would not be offered if supposed to have no effect on the state of those for whom they are offered.

Although greatly corrupted and debased, it is in this church alone that these old practices are preserved. *Sraddha* and *Pinda* are now neglected, because the inner constitution of man, and the constitution of the macrocosm, are not understood in such a way as to make the ceremony of the slightest use. – W.B.

eternally persisting, which is the witness and perceiver of every passing change, itself unchangeable. All objects, and all states of what Western philosophers call mind, are modifications, for in order to be seen or known by us, there must be some change, either partial or total, from a precedent state. The perceiver of these changes is the inner man – Arjuna-Krishna.

This leads us to the conviction that there must be a universal presiding spirit, the producer as well as the spectator, of all this collection of animate and inanimate things. The philosophy taught by Krishna holds that at first this spirit – so called, however, by me only for the purpose of the discussion – remained in a state of quiet with no objects, because as yet there was no modification. But, resolving to create, or rather to emanate the universe, IT formed a picture of what should be, and this at once was a modification willingly brought about in the hitherto wholly unmodified spirit; thereupon the divine Idea was gradually expanded, coming forth into objectivity; while the essence of the presiding spirit remained unmodified, and became the perceiver of its own expanded idea. Its modifications are visible (and invisible) nature. Its essence then differentiates itself continually in various directions, becoming the immortal part of each man – the Krishna who talks to Arjuna. Coming like a spark from the central fire, it partakes of that nature, that is, the quality of being unmodifiable, and assumes to itself – as a cover, so to speak – the human body and thus, being in essence unmodified, it has the capacity to perceive all the changes going on around the body.

This *Self* must be recognized as being within, pondered over, and as much as possible understood, if we are to gain any true knowledge.

We have thus quickly, and perhaps in an inadequate way, come down to a consideration of Arjuna as composed of all these generals and heroes enumerated in this chapter, and who are, as we said, the various powers, passions and qualities included in the Western terms "brain and mind."

Modern physical, mental and psychological sciences have as yet but scratched the surface of that which they are engaged in examining. Physical science confessedly is empiric, knowing but the very outposts of the laws of nature, and our psychology is in a worse state. The latter

has less chance for arriving at the truth than physical science, because scientists are proceeding to a gradual demonstration of natural laws by careful examination of facts easily observable, but psychology is a something which demands the pursuit of another method than that of science, or those now observed.

It would avail nothing at present to specify the Aryan nomenclature for all the sheaths – as they call them – that envelope the soul, because we as yet have not acquired the necessary ideas. Of what use is it to say that certain impressions reside in the *Anandamaya* sheath. But there is such an one, whether we call it by that name or by any other. We can, however, believe that the soul, in order to at last reach the objective plane where its experience is gained, places upon itself, one after the other, various sheaths, each having its peculiar property and function. The mere physical brain is thus seen to be only the material organ first used by the real percipient in receiving or conveying ideas and perceptions; and so with all the other organs, they are only the special seats for centralizing the power of the real man in order to experience the modifications of nature at that particular spot.

Who is the sufferer from this despondency?

It is our false personality as distinguished from Krishna – the higher self – which is oppressed by the immediate resistance offered by all the lower part of our nature, and by those persons with whom we are most closely connected, as soon as we begin to draw them away from all old habits, and to present a new style of thinking for their consideration.

For Arjuna, sinking down upon the seat of that chariot which is his body, fell back upon his own nature and found therein the elements of search and courage, as well as those previous ones of gloom which arise first, being nearer the natural man. Reliance and pressure upon our own inner nature, in moments of darkness, are sure to be answered by the voice of Krishna, the inner guide.

The first consequences of the despondency

are to make us feel that the battle we have invited ought not to be carried on, and we then are almost overwhelmed with the desire to give it up. Some do give it up, to begin it again, in a succeeding life, while others like Arjuna listen to the voice of Krishna, and bravely fight it out to the end.

"Thus, in the *Upanishads*, in the holy *Bhagavad-Gita,* in the science of the Supreme Spirit, in the Book of Devotion, in the colloquy between the Holy Krishna and Arjuna, stands the first chapter by name:

THE DESPONDENCY OF ARJUNA

Salutation to the god of battles, to the charioteer, to him who disposeth the forces aright, who leadeth us on to victory, with whom alone success is certain: that he may guide us to where the never-dying light shineth: Om!

THE FIRST ABYSS

Salutation to the prowess of Krishna! May it be with us in the fight, strengthening our hearts that they faint not in the gloomy night that follows in the path of the day.

The first chapter is ended. In one aspect, the *Bhagavad-Gita* is a personal book. It is for each man; and it is in that way we have so far considered it. Some have called it obscure, and others a book which deals solely with the great principles of nature; with only great questions of cosmogony; with difficult and bewildering questions relating to the first cause; and still others think it is contradictory and vague. But this first scene in the great colloquy is plain. It has the din of arms, the movement of battalions and the disposition of forces with their generals. No one need feel any hesitation now, for we are face to face with ourselves. The weak man, or he who does not care for truth no matter where it leads, had better shut the book now. Unless he can go on reading the poem with the fixed intention of applying it to himself, it will do him no good whatever. He may say, however, that he will read it for what it may seem to contain, but if he reads to the end of time and does not fairly regard this first lecture, his knowledge gained further on will be no knowledge. It is indeed the book of the great mystery; but that problem was never solved *for* anyone; it must be settled and solved *by* each one *for himself.* No doubt it was for this reason that Vyasa, to whom the poem is attributed, placed this conflict, in which the principal characters are Arjuna and Krishna, at the outset.

It would have been easier to have made them sit down for a philosophical discourse beforehand in which reasons pro and con regarding any battle would be discussed, and then, after all that was done, to show us Arjuna, encouraged and equipped, entering upon the war sure of victory because he had spent much time in dispelling his doubts. But instead of doing this he pictures the impetuous Arjuna precipitating the battle before he had considered whom it was he had to fight.

It does not appear in the *Bhagavad-Gita* that Krishna had induced Arjuna, as was the case, to make the war for the purpose of regaining his kingdom. While stirring him up to it Krishna had wisely refrained from telling that which Arjuna finds out on the first day, that he had to oppose all these friends, kinsmen and preceptors. It was a wise reticence. If we completely apprehended the enormous power of our passions and various tendencies, most of us would throw up the fight in advance; for nothing would persuade us that any power within could withstand against such overwhelming odds. For us then the incitement to fight is found, not so much in any conversation that we hold now with Krishna, but in the impulses which are carried across, again and again, from incarnation to incarnation.

We take up the gage over and over, life after life, in experience after experience, never completely defeated if we always look to Krishna – our higher self. And in the tale of Arjuna we find this also. For in a succeeding book, called *Anugita,* is an account of the hero walking with Krishna through the Palace of Maya. The battle over, for the time, Arjuna tells his friend that he has really forgotten much that he had told him (in the *Bhagavad-Gita*) and asks for a succinct repetition. This is given to him by the great warrior.

The palace of maya is this body of illusion, built up around us by desire. In our last birth we had all the advice given in this poem, and walking today through the palace, which sometimes seems so lovely, we now and then have reminiscences from the past. Sometimes we stoutly take up the fight; but surely, if we have listened to the guide aright, we will compel ourselves at last to carry it out until finished.

In coming to the conclusion of this first chapter, we reach the *first abyss.* It is not the great abyss, albeit it may seem to us, in our

experience, to be the greatest. We are now vis-a-vis our own despair, and doubt its companion. Many a student of theosophy has in our own sight reached this point – all true students do. Like a little child who first ventures from the parent's side, we are affrighted at what seems new to us, and dropping our weapons attempt to get away; but, in the pursuit of theosophy it is not possible to go back.

Because the abyss is behind us.

There is in nature a law that operates in every department whether moral or physical, and which may now be called that of undulation and then that of inhibition; while at other times it reappears as vibration, and still again as attraction and repulsion, but all these changes are only apparent because at bottom it is the same. Among vegetables it causes the sap to flow up the tree in one way and will not permit it to return in the same direction. In our own blood circulation we find the blood propelled from the heart, and that nature has provided little valves which will not permit it to return to the heart by the way it came, but by the way provided. Medical and anatomical science are not quite sure what it is that causes the blood to pass these valves; whether it is pressure from behind communicated by the heart, or the pressure by atmosphere from without which gently squeezes, as it were, the blood upon its way. But the occultist does not find himself limited by these empirical deductions. He goes at once to the center and declares that the impulse *is* from the heart and that that organ receives its impulse from the great astral heart or the *akasa*, which has been said by all mystics to have a double motion, or alternate vibration – the systole and diastole of nature.

So in this sense the valve in the circulation represents the abyss behind us that we cannot repass. We are in the great general circulation and compelled, whether we like it or not, to obey its forward impulse.

This place of dejection of Arjuna is also the same thing as is mentioned in *Light on the Path* as the silence after the storm. In tropical countries this silence is very apparent. After the storm has burst and passed, there is a quietness when the earth and the trees seem to have

momentarily ceased making their familiar, manifold noises. They are obeying the general law and beginning the process of assimilation.

And in the astral world it is just the same. When one enters there for the first time, a great silence falls, during which the regulated soul is imbibing its surroundings and becoming accustomed to them. It says nothing but waits quietly until it has become in vibration precisely the same as the plane in which it is; when that is accomplished then it can speak properly, make itself understood, and likewise understand. But the unregulated soul flies to that plane of the astral world in a disturbed state, hurries to speak before it is able to do so intelligibly and as a consequence is not understood, while it increases its own confusion and makes it less likely that it will soon come to understand. People are attracted to the astral plane; they hear of its wonders and astonishments and like a child with a new toy in sight they hurry to grasp it. They refuse to learn its philosophy because that seems dry and difficult. So they plunge in, and as Murdhna Joti said in a former article in this magazine, they then "swim in it and cut capers like a boy in a pool of water." But for the earnest student and true disciple the matter is serious. He has vowed to have the truth at whatever cost, willing to go wherever she leads – even if it be to death.

So Krishna, having got Arjuna to where the battle has really begun, where retreat is not possible, begins to tell his loved disciple and friend what is the philosophy that underlies it all and without which success cannot be compassed.

We should not fail to observe at this point, that when Arjuna threw down his bow and arrows, the flying of missiles had already begun. We cannot say that when the philosophical discourse began between these two the opposing forces declared a truce until the mighty heroes should give the signal, because there is nowhere any verse that would authorize it, and we also can read in the accompanying books that all the paraphernalia of war had been brought onto the field and that the enemy would not desist, no matter what Arjuna might do. Now there is a meaning here, which is also a part of the great abyss the son of Pandu saw behind him, and which every one of us also sees.

We enter upon this great path of action in occultism mentally disposed towards final victory. This mental attitude instantly throws

all the parts of our being into agitation, during which the tendencies which are by nature antipathetic to each other separate and range themselves upon opposite sides. This creates great distress, with oftentimes wandering of the mind, and adds additional terror to our dark despair. We may then sink down and declare that we will fly to a forest – or as they did once in Europe, to a monastery – so as to get away from what seems to be unfavorable ground for a conflict. But we have evoked a force in nature and set up a current and vibration which *will go on* no matter what we do. This is the meaning of the "flying of arrows" even when Arjuna sat down on the bench of his chariot.

At this point of our progress we should *examine our motive and desire.*

It has been said in some theosophical writings of the present day, that a "spiritualized will" ought to be cultivated. As terms are of the highest importance we ought to be careful how we use them, for in the inner life they represent either genuine, regulated forces, or useless and abortive things that lead to nothing but confusion. This term "spiritualized will" leads to error, because in fact it has no existence. The mistake has grown out of the constant dwelling on "will" and "forces" needed for the production of phenomena, as something the disciple should strive to obtain – whether so confessed or not – while the real motive power is lost sight of. It is very essential that we should clearly understand this, for if we make the blunder of attributing to *will* or to any other faculty an action which it does not have, or of placing it in a plane to which it does not belong, we at once remove ourselves far from the real knowledge, since all action on this plane is by mind alone.

The old Hermetic statement is: "*Behind will stands desire*," and it is true.

Will is a pure, colorless force which is moved into action by *desire*. If desire does not give a direction, the will is motionless; and just as desire indicates, so the will proceeds to execute.

But as there are countless wills of sentient beings constantly plying to and fro in our sphere, and must be at all times in some manner acting upon one another, the question arises: What is that sort of knowledge which shows how to use the will so that the effect of

counteracting wills may not be felt? That knowledge is lost among the generality of men and is only instinctive here and there in the world as a matter of karmic result, giving us examples of men whose will seems to lead them on to success, as Jay Gould and others.

Furthermore, men of the world are not desiring to see results which shall be in accord with the general will of nature, because they are wanting this and that for their own benefit. Their desire, then, no matter how strong, is limited or nullified: (1) by lack of knowledge of how to counteract other wills; (2) by being in opposition to the general will of nature without the other power of being able to act strongly in opposition to that too.

So it follows—as we see in practice in life – *that men obtain only a portion of that which they desire.*

The question next arises: Can a man go against the general will of nature and escape destruction, and also be able to desire wickedly with knowledge, and accomplish, through will, what he wishes?

Such a man can do all of these – except to escape destruction. That is sure to come, no matter at how remote a period.

He acquires extraordinary knowledge, enabling him to use powers for selfish purposes during immense periods of time, but at last the insidious effects of the opposition to the general true will makes itself felt and he is destroyed forever.

This fact is the origin of the destruction-of-worlds myths, and of those myths of combats such as between Krishna and Ravana, the demon god, and between Durga and the demons.

For in other ages, as is to again occur in ages to come, these wickedly desiring people, having great knowledge, increase to an enormous extent and threaten the stability of the world. Then the adherents of the good law can no longer quietly work on humanity, but come out in force, and a fight ensues in which the black magicians are always destroyed, because the good adepts possess not only equal knowledge with the bad ones, but have in addition the great assistance of the general will of nature which is not in control of the others, and so it is inevitable that the good should triumph always. This assistance is also the heritage of every true student, and may be invoked by the real disciple when he has arrived at and passed the first abyss.

"And when the Great King of Glory saw the Heavenly Treasure of the Wheel, he sprinkled it with water and said: 'Roll onward, O my Lord, the Wheel! O my Lord, go forth and overcome!'"

CHAPTER II
DEVOTION THROUGH APPLICATION TO THE SPECULATIVE DOCTRINES

> "And now, under the Lotus in the Heart, glows the lamp of the Soul. Protected by the gods who there stand guard, it sheds its soft rays in every direction. "

A mighty spirit moves through the pages of the *Bhagavad-Gita.* It has the seductive influence of beauty; yet, like strength, it fills one as with the sound of armies assembling or the roar of great waters. Appealing alike to the warrior and the philosopher, it shows to the one the righteousness of lawful action, and to the other the calmness which results to him who has reached inaction through action. Schlegel, after studying the poem, pays tribute to it in these words: "By the Brahmins, reverence of masters is considered the most sacred of duties. Thee therefore, first, most holy prophet, interpreter of the Deity, by whatever name thou wast called among mortals, the author of this poem, by whose oracles the mind is rapt with ineffable delight to doctrines lofty, eternal, and divine – thee first, I say, I hail, and shall always worship at thy feet."

The second chapter begins to teach philosophy, but in such a way that Arjuna is led on gradually step by step to the end of the dialogue; and yet the very first instructions from Krishna are so couched that the end and purpose of the scheme are seen at the beginning.

Although philosophy seems dry to most people, and especially to minds in the Western world who are surrounded by the rush of their new and quite undeveloped civilization, yet it must be taught and understood. It has become the fashion to some extent to scout careful study or practice and go in for the rapid methods inaugurated in America. In many places emotional goodness is declared to exceed in value the calmness that results from a broad philosophical foundation, and in others astral wonder seeking, or great strength of mind whether discriminative or not, is given the first rank. Strength without knowledge, and sympathetic tears without the ability to be calm – in

fine, faith without works – will not save us. And this is one of the lessons of the second chapter.

The greatest of the ancients inculcated by both symbols and books the absolute necessity for the acquirement of philosophical knowledge, inasmuch as strength or special faculties are useless without it. Those Greeks and others who recorded some of the wisdom of the elder Egyptians well illustrated this. They said, that in the symbols it was shown, as where Hermes is represented as an old and a young man, intending by this to signify that he who rightly inspects sacred matters ought to be both intelligent and strong, one of these without the other being imperfect. And for the same reason the symbol of the great Sphinx was established; the beast signifying strength, and the man wisdom. For strength when destitute of the ruling aid of wisdom, is overcome by stupid astonishment confusing all things together; and for the purpose of action the intellect is useless when it is deprived of strength. So, whether our strength is that of sympathy or of astral vision, we will be confounded if philosophical knowledge be absent.

But, so as not to be misunderstood, I must answer the question that will be asked, "Do you then condemn sympathy and love, and preach a cold philosophy only?" By no means. Sympathy and emotion are as much parts of the great whole as knowledge, but inquiring students wish to know all that lies in the path. The office of sympathy, charity, and all other forms of goodness, so far as the effect on us is concerned, is to entitle us to help. By this exercise we inevitably attract to us those souls who have the knowledge and are ready to help us to acquire it also. But while we ignore philosophy and do not try to attain to right discrimination, we must pass through many lives, many weary treadmills of life, until at last little by little we have been forced, without our will, into the possession of the proper seeds of mental action from which the crop of right discrimination may be gathered.

Arjuna asks Krishna:

> "As I am of a disposition which is affected by compassion and the fear of doing wrong, my mind is bewildered. Tell me truly what may be best for me to do! I am thy disciple, wherefore instruct me in my duty, who am under thy tuition; for my understanding is confounded by the dictates of my duty, and I see nothing

> that may assuage the grief which drieth up my faculties, although I were to obtain a kingdom without a rival upon earth or dominion over the hosts of heaven. "

Krishna, now the *guru* – or spiritual teacher – of Arjuna, makes a reply which is not excelled anywhere in the poem; pointing out the permanence and eternal nature of the soul, the progress it has to make through reincarnation to perfection, the error of imagining that we really do anything ourselves, and showing how all duties must be performed by him who desires to reach salvation. The words used by the Blessed Lord in speaking of the soul cannot be added to by me. He says:

> "The wise grieve not for dead or living. But never at any period did I, or thou, or these kings of men, not exist, nor shall any of us at any time henceforward cease to exist. As the soul in the body undergoes the changes of childhood, prime, and age, so it obtains a new body hereafter; a sensible man is not troubled about that. But the contact of the elements, O son of Kunti, which bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain, which come and go and are temporary, these do thou endure, O Bharata! [110]For that man whom, being the same in pain and pleasure and ever constant, these elements do not afflict, is fitted for immortality. There is no existence for what does not exist, nor is there any non-existence for what exists. . . . Know this, that that by which all this universe is created is indestructible. No one can cause the destruction of this inexhaustible thing*** He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who thinks it can be killed, both of these are wrong in judgment. It is not born, nor dies at any time; it has no origin, nor will it ever have an end. Unborn, changeless, eternal both as to future and past time, it is not slain when the body is killed. How can that

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[110] In this verse, the 14th, Krishna calls Arjuna by two names: first – as son of Kunti (his mother), and second – as Bharata (descendant of the mighty Bharata). He is reminded of his earthly origin in the beginning when reference is made to the elements that produce bodily sensations; and at the end, when adjured to endure these changes, his attention is directed to a great and powerful, spiritual, paternal ancestor. All of this is significant. – B.

> man, O son of Pritha, who knows that it is indestructible, constant, unborn, and inexhaustible, really cause the death of anybody or kill anybody himself? As a man abandons worn-out clothes and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn-out bodies and enter other new ones. Weapons cannot cleave it. Fire cannot burn it, nor can water wet it, nor wind dry it. . . . It is constant, capable of going everywhere, firm, immovable, and eternal. It is said to be invisible, incomprehensible, immutable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. "

This is the same doctrine as is found in the *Isavasya-Upanishad*: The Identity of all Spiritual Beings, and Resignation. And by "spiritual beings" is meant all life above the inorganic, for man is not admitted to be material. There is only one life, one consciousness. It masquerades under all the different forms of sentient beings, and those varying forms with their intelligences mirror a portion of the *One Life*, thus producing in each a false idea of egoism. A continuance of belief in that false ego produces a continuance of ignorance, thus delaying salvation. The beginning of the effort to dissipate this false belief is the beginning of the Path; the total dissipation of it is the perfection of *yoga*, or union with God. The entry upon that Path cannot be made until resignation *is* consummated; for, as the *Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* say:

> "All this, whatsoever moves on earth, is to be surrendered to the Lord – the Self. When thou hast surrendered all this; then thou mayest enjoy."

If this be true, then how necessary to consider philosophy so as to be able to cut off the false belief. And how useless to pursue occultism merely for your own benefit. You may know all about currents and polarities, about any and every phenomenon possible in the astral world, but with the death of your body it is lost, leaving to you only the amount of real spiritual advance you happen to have made. But once resign and all is possible. This will not ruin your life nor destroy any proper ideals; poor and petty ideals had better be at once lost. It may seem that all ideals are gone, but that will be only the first effect of taking this step.

We must be ready to say at any moment under whatever circumstances, whether expected or unexpected: "It is just what I in fact desired." For only those ideals can be dissipated which rest upon a lower basis than the highest aim, or which are not in accord with nature's (God's) law. And as our aim ought to be to reach the supreme condition and to help all other sentient beings to do so also, we must cultivate complete resignation to the Law, the expression and operation of which is seen in the circumstances of life and the ebb and flow of our inner being. All that can be gotten out of wealth, or beauty, or art, or pleasure, are merely pools of water found along our path as it wanders through the desert of life. If we are not seeking them their appearance gives us intense pleasure, and we are thus able to use them for our good and that of others just so long as the Law leaves them to us; but when that superior power removes them, we must say: "It is just what I in fact desired." Any other course is blindness. All the passing shows of life, whether fraught with disaster or full of fame and glory, are teachers; he who neglects them, neglects opportunitieswhich seldom the gods repeat. And the only way to learn from them is through the heart's resignation; for when we become in heart completely poor, we at once are the treasurers and disbursers of enormous riches. Krishna then insists on the scrupulous performance of natural duty. [111] "And considering thine own duty as a Kshatriya, thou art not right to waver. For there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than lawful war. "

In order to see more clearly the occasion for his insistence upon performance of duty, we must remember that at the opening of the battle Arjuna "threw down his bow and arrows." This, in India, meant that he then resolved to desert the circumstances in which karma had placed him and to become an ascetic, or, as has been frequently

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[111] Some students, as well as critics, have said that theosophy teaches a running away from family and from the world, and that neither knowledge nor salvation can be gained without a ridiculous asceticism which would upset the natural order. This is wrong. And when it is believed to be a fact – now asserted by me in confidence of support from all real Theosophists – that the blessed Masters who ordered the founding of are Society constantly read and inculcate the Bhagavad-Gita's philosophy, we perceive that such assertions against the Society's aims are incorrect. – B

proposed by Western students, he wished to get away from a state of society which offered apparent obstruction to spiritual culture. But Krishna refers him to his birth in the Kshatriya – or warrior – caste, and to the natural duty of a Kshatriya, which is war. The natural caste of Arjuna might have been represented as that of merchant, but wisely it was not, for this is the book of action, and only a warrior fitly typifies action [112]; so his natural duty will stand for whatever be that of any man. We are not to shirk our karma; by abhorring it we only make new karma. Our only true course is to "let the motive for action be in the action itself, never in its reward; not to be incited to action by the hope of the result, nor yet indulge a propensity to inertness." This advice and the direction to see the one Spirit in all things and all things in IT (ch. xiii) express the gist of the *Bhagavad-Gita*'s teaching as to the proper attitude to be assumed by those striving after salvation.

In verse 40 Krishna alludes to this system as being one of initiation:

> "In this no initiation is lost, nor are there any evil consequences, and even a little of this practice saves from great danger; there is no destruction of nor detriment to one's efforts. "

Although not proclaimed in the newspapers nor advertised here and there through Secretaries, Delegates, and "Doors," this is the mother and the head of all systems of initiation. It is the progenitor of the mystic Rosicrucians, who have adopted the *lotus* and changed it

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[112] My opinion is that the Kshatriya caste is the greatest. The Brahmins, it is true, have always had more veneration paid them as being spiritual teachers and thus representing the head of Brahma; but in some of the Aryan sacrifices there is an occasion when the Kshatriya ranks the Brahmin. The latter are more the conservators of true doctrine; but when the time comes for the "gods to descend in order to establish a new harmony on earth," they always begin with a warrior. Osiris who educated and solidified the Egyptians was a warrior, and the mysterious Melchizedek, who blessed Abraham, was prophet, priest, and king, that is – warrior. Then, too, the warrior caste could learn and speak the *Vedas* as well as engage in war, whereas the Brahmin's only duty was that of a teacher and not fighter. The Kshatriya therefore stands in the position of mediator between the action of the body of Brahma and the calm inaction of Brahma's head. – B

into a *rose*[113], and all the other hundreds of initiating occult societies are merely faint and incomplete copies of this real one; but, unlike those, *it* has never dissolved. It is secret, because, founded in nature and having only real Hierophants at the head, its privacy cannot be invaded without the real key. And that key, in each degree, is the aspirant himself. Until that aspirant has become in fact the sign and the key, he cannot enter the degree above him. As a whole then, and in each degree, it is self-protective.

Thus including all other systems, it is the most difficult of all; but as at some time, in this life or in a succeeding age, we must perforce enter this Lodge, the attempt at entry might as well be made at once. Of this we will speak in our next.

In my last I said that a system of initiation is spoken of which is the mother of all others, and that all the rest are mere exoteric copies or perversions of the real. In order that the idea intended to be expressed may be made clear, it is to be stated that the system is not confined to India, but at the same time it is true that the Western world has up to this time been so deeply engaged in the pursuit of mere money and external enjoyment that no body of Hierophants has taken up its actual residence in Europe or America as yet. There is very little force in the objection that, if those Adepts have such powers as have been ascribed to them, they could very easily have a residence here and overcome all the influences of the place. If it were in the least necessary that they should be here, no doubt can there be that they would come. But as all of the work required to be done, all that could possibly be accomplished, is to be achieved by the messengers sent out into each country who, so to say, prepare the ground, with the assistance of the Adepts, for others who follow them, there would be a waste of energy

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[113] The probability is that the Rosicrucian "rose" was altered from the lotus because the latter flower was not understood in Europe, whereas the rose was; and the rose is the nearest to the lotus, taken all in all. In Japan the lotus in the heart is adhered to; they say that by directing attention to the heart, it is found to burst open into a lotus of eight petals, in each of which resides one power, while in the center sits the lord of all. – B

if the Hierophants appeared in person. Nor are those messengers dismayed by the critical attitude of those persons who, wanting a sign, continually deny that the help for the workers is afforded because the givers of it cannot be seen; and it can also be admitted that even the workers themselves are not continually in receipt of instruction or telegrams showing how and where to work. They are men and women who possess a faith that carries them through a long course of effort without a glimpse of those who have sent them. Yet at the same time some of them now and then see very plain evidence of the fact that they are constantly assisted.

> "That we all labor together transmitting the same charge and succession,
>
> We few equals indifferent of lands, indifferent of times,
>
> We, enclosers of all continents, all castes, allowers of all theologies,
>
> Compassionaters, perceivers, rapport of men,
>
> We walk silent among disputes and assertions, but reject not the disputers: nor anything that is asserted,
>
> We hear the bawling and din, we are reached at by divisions, jealousies, recriminations on every side,
>
> They close peremptorily upon us to surround us, my comrade,
>
> Yet we walk unheld, free, the whole earth over, journeying up and down till we make our ineffaceable mark upon time and the diverse eras,
>
> Till we saturate time and eras, that the men and women of races, ages to come, may prove brethren and lovers as we are."

So all this preparation is similar to that of the primeval forest by the early settlers in America; it is as yet hardly a tilling of the soil, but rather a clearing off of trees and weeds. This is not because they are unable to do more, but because the weeds and trees are there requiring to be removed before the Elder Ones can usefully push on in person the further development.

> "When the materials are all prepared and ready the architects shall appear."

All human beings are working through this system of initiation, and for that reason it includes all the exoteric societies. Very often the Masters in this have appeared in those when they saw an opportunity for sowing the seed, which, although for a time to be enclosed in the shell of formalism, was to be preserved for future use; just as the Egyptian mummy held in its hand for centuries the germ that blossomed and bore fruit in our day. And since man in all his struggles must be helped, they have assisted in political changes where a hope was held out for the rise of a beneficent era. [114] The great mass of men are not with their own knowledge engaged in the work of this powerful and impregnable *Lodge,* but they will knowingly engage therein at some point in the course of their long evolution. And yet at every hour of each day these Masters are willing and anxious to meet those who are clear-eyed enough to see their true destiny, and noble-hearted so as to work for "the great orphan, humanity."

Then, further, none of us, and especially those who have heard of the Path or of Occultism or of the Masters, can say with confidence that he is not already one who has passed through some initiations with knowledge of them. We may be already initiated into some higher degree than our present attainments would suggest, and are undergoing a new trial unknown to ourselves. It is better to consider that we are, being sure to eliminate all pride of that unknown advance we have made. Having so concluded, we know that this long life is in itself another initiation, wherein we succeed or fail just as we learn the lesson of life. Some, I know, will not hasten to adopt this view, for they desire the Law to work in the manner appointed by them; they wish to have a sign or a password or a parchment or some wonderful test propounded, to which they shall be ready to submit at a certain time and place. But this is not the manner of it, and all true students know that. Surely if the little circumstances of life are not understood, if they have yet power to light the torch of anger or blow up the smoldering

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[114] It has been asserted by some theosophical writer that these adepts were concerned in the formation of the American Republic, and either were here in person or sent messengers. – B

fire of lust, no set time or tournament will be offered for you by the Masters of this *Lodge.* Those set times and larger tests *are* given and have in their place to be overcome, but they belong to the day when you have raised the arch of attainment all perfect but the keystone – that is found or lost in the appointed trial.

Reaching to the actual door of this Lodge is the Path that I spoke of in my last, and leading to that Path are many roads. We might as well attempt to enter the Path in this incarnation as to wait for succeeding lives.

There is great encouragement in Krishna's words to Arjuna in the second chapter: In this system there is no destruction of or detriment to one's efforts; even a very small portion of this duty delivereth a man from great fear.

This refers to the law of karma. Every point of progress gained is never in reality lost. Even did we die at a time when our lives were not stainless, the real level of our development would not be lowered, for upon reassuming a mortal body in some after life on this earth we take up the thread just where we dropped it. In a later chapter Krishna says that we come in contact with the knowledge which belonged to us in our former body, and from that time we struggle more diligently toward perfection. Patanjali also says the same thing, and all the Aryan sacred books concur in the opinion. [115] The thoughts and aspirations of our life form a mass of force that operates instantly upon our acquirement of a body that furnishes the corresponding instrument, or upon our so altering our mental state as to give it opportunity for action. The objection that this would be a suspension of energy is not tenable, since such a thing is well known in the physical world, even if called by some other name. We are not obliged to rest on that objection, as it by no means follows that the energy is suspended; it has its operation in other ways.

The encouragement given by Krishna leads us to consider what method is offered for entering upon the Path. We find it to be a right

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[115] See Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms*, Book 2; and *Vishnu-Smriti*, chap. xcvii, v. 11.

knowledge of the spirit. This right knowledge is found in the second chapter.

As by all illuminated sages, the ultimate truth is first declared by the Blessed Lord as we have seen, and in the very chapter wherein right action is insisted upon as the way to liberation. He then, proceeding to explain himself further, points out errors common to humanity, and certain false views that prevailed in India then, as they do now.

> Verse 41: – In this system there is only one single object of a steady, constant nature, O son of Kuru. Those who do not persevere, and whose principles are indefinite, have objects with many ramifications and without end.

In the men thus described, desires for worldly or intellectual acquisitions prevail and, desires being infinite as also capable of producing endless modifications of desire, there is no concentration possible. This also has an application to the methods of our present scientific schools, which indulge in an eternal seeking for so-called facts before general principles are admitted. One single branch of investigation with them has endless ramifications that no human being could compass in a lifetime. Then:

> Not disposed to meditation and perseverance is the intention of those who are devoted to enjoyments and dominion, and whose minds are seduced by that flowery sentence which is proclaimed by the unwise, who delight in texts from the *Vedas*, O son of Pritha, and say, "There is nothing else than that," being covetous-minded and considering heaven as the very highest good; offering rebirth as the reward of actions, and enjoining many special ceremonies for the sake of obtaining pleasures and dominion, and preferring the transient enjoyment of heaven to eternal absorption.

This is better understood when some of the ideas held in India regarding sacrifices and ceremonies are known. In the Occident sacrifices have long gone out of use, as there appeared to be no reason for them. And yet it must seem strange to the reflective mind that Christian nations should claim redemption through the Jews whose

prophet enjoined sacrifices, and when Jesus himself said that not one jot or tittle of the law should pass away. In the place of the sacrifices of the East, the West has adopted a mere theory to be embraced, together with an uncertain moral code to be followed, with a result which is the same as that claimed by the Hindus – save only in one respect. That difference lies in the doctrine of reincarnation. The Christian looks for an eternal reward in heaven and knows nothing of reincarnation on earth, while the Hindu relies upon pleasure to be had in heaven – called *Svarga* – and a continuation of it upon earth by reason of a fortunate rebirth. They have special ceremonies, certain sorts of sacrifices, penances, prayers, and actions, the result of which is a rebirth on earth in a royal family, or with great riches, or in any other sort of pleasant circumstances; and also a sure admittance to heaven. Some ceremonies procure entrance into a delightful state after death which will last for incalculable periods of time.

Now no one of these sorts of procedure leads us to the ultimate, but all are causes of karma and of delusion: therefore Krishna did not approve them to Arjuna. And his warning is useful to theosophists who are students or wish to become such. With them the false view warned against by Krishna has altered itself into a craving for phenomena, or to perform some action that shall bring them the favor of *Mahatma*s, or a morbid fear of making karma, or else an equally accentuated desire to acquire good karma. They should abandon those attitudes and carefully study the following verses, trying to incorporate their true meaning into their very being.

> The subject of the three *Vedas* is the assemblage of the three qualities. O Arjuna! be thou free from these three qualities, from the ordinary influence of the natural opposites, reposing on eternal truth, free from worldly anxieties, self-possessed* * *Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, never in its event. Be not one whose motive for action is the hope of reward. Let not thy life be spent in inaction. Depend upon concentration, perform thy duty, abandon all thought of the consequence, and make the event equal to thee, whether it terminate in good or evil; for such an equanimity is called Yoga (union with God). By far inferior to union with wisdom is action.

> Seek an asylum, then, in wisdom alone; for the miserable and unhappy are so on account of the event of things. Men who are endued with true wisdom dismiss, by means of this concentration, alike successful and unsuccessful results. Study then to obtain this concentration of thy understanding, for such concentration is a precious art.
>
> Wise men, who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions, are freed from the chains of birth in this world, and go to the regions of eternal happiness.
>
> When thy reason shall get the better of the gloomy weakness of thy heart, then shalt thou have obtained all knowledge which has been or is to be taught. When thy understanding, by study brought to maturity, shall be fixed immovably in contemplation, then shall it obtain true wisdom.

The first portion of this paper was designedly enlarged in order to precede the above. The last quoted verses contain the essence of what is called *Karma-yoga*, or, as it might be translated, *concentration and contemplation while engaged in action.* It is difficult, just as it is difficult to enter upon the Path, and if we desire to tread that aright we must know what we should do as true travelers. Krishna seems to me to here settle the dispute as to whether faith or works will save us. Mere faith will not do it, because in every act of faith there is some action. And it would appear to be impossible to acquire true faith without at once turning it into that sort of action which our faith shows us must be done, as it were, in evidence; yet action, pure and simple, will not be a cause of liberation, inasmuch as action, or karma, will produce new karma. We must therefore seek for concentration in order that we may be able to do those actions which the All-Wise presents to us to be done, remaining the while unaffected. We have nothing to do with the results; they will come of themselves, and are beyond us; they are already done so far as we are concerned. But if we perform either an act of faith or an action of the body, hoping for any result – no matter what – we become to that extent attached to the consequences, and thus bound by them. It matters not whether those consequences be good or bad. Many will think that it is well to have attachment to good

consequences, since that has been the received opinion. But this is unwise, because the only reason for it is found in the idea that thereby one is somewhat better than some other persons who are enamored of evil results and desire to see them come to pass. This idea produces separateness, and is opposed to that *identity* without the realization of which there can be no true knowledge. We should therefore be imitators of the Deity, who, while acting as he does in the manifestation of universes, is at the same time free from all consequences. To the extent that we do so we become the Deity himself, for, as we follow the dictates of the Lord who dwells in us, we resign every act upon the altar, leaving the consequences to him.

The attitude to be assumed, then, is that of doing every act, small and great, trifling or important, because it is before us to do, and as a mere carrying out by us as instruments of the will of that Deity who is ourself. Nor should we stop to inquire whether the act is of any use to the Lord within [116], as some ask. For, they say, of what possible benefit to him can be the small hourly acts which, as soon as done, are forgotten? It is not for us to inquire. The act that pleases that Lord is the act which is done as presented with no attachment to its result, while the act that is unpleasing to him is the one which we do, desiring some result therefrom.

This practice is the highest; that which some day we must and will learn to perform. Other sorts are inculcated in other writings, but they are only steps to lead us at last to this. Therefore I said, Let us enter the Path as soon as we can.

We are still on the second chapter. If my object were merely to skim through the poem, showing where it agreed with, differed from, or reconciled the various systems of philosophy that were followed in India, we could have long ago reached the end of the book. But we are looking at it in one of its aspects – the one most important for all earnest students – the personal interior view that aids us to reach

[116] *Isvara,* the particular manifestation of Brahman in each human being. – B

Moksha [117] From this standpoint we can easily defer a consideration of the philosophical discussion to a later period.

Let us take up some of the instruction given in the portion of the second chapter just finished. The remainder of the lecture is devoted to a reply from Krishna to Arjuna's question as to what is the description, appearance, carriage, and conversation of the man who has attained to steady meditation.

Krishna says that "the subject of the three *Vedas* is the assemblage of the three qualities." These three qualities are *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* and are separately treated in a succeeding chapter. Now *sattva-guna* [118] is a pure, high quality, the opposite of *tamas-guna* which is darkness and indifference. Yet the remarkable advice is here given, "be thou free from these three qualities." It is a very great wonder that this has not been pounced upon before as showing that Krishna directs his follower to renounce the quality of goodness, and thus directly encourages wickedness, but as that is immediately followed by the direction to "repose upon eternal truth," possible critics have been perhaps deterred by the seeming paradox. It is evident at once that a higher sort of *sattva* is referred to in the words "eternal truth." *Sattva* is the Sanskrit for truth, and is not qualified when its place among the three qualities is given, so that, when the disciple frees himself from this ordinary *sattva,* he is to take refuge in its eternal counterpart. Further, the instruction is not to *renounce* truth or either of the other two qualities, but to remain freed from the influence or binding force that any sort of quality has upon the human ego.

It is difficult for a great being such as Krishna to convey to the inquiring mind these high themes, and so, perforce, language must be used that forever has two meanings – it continually retreats before us, going from one to the other. "*Sattwa*" – truth – had to be taken to express the highest quality of any being who possesses them, and yet, when we begin to speak of the highest conceivable state in which attributes are absent, we still use the same word, only adding to it *eternal.*

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[117] Salvation.

[118] Quality of truth or purity.

The essence of the instruction given by Krishna is *to become devoted,* as he says, "Therefore give thyself up to devotion." He prepared the way for that by showing, as adverted to in the last article, how erroneous it was to follow even the special ceremonies and texts laid down for the people in the *Vedas*. Those ceremonies procured either rewards in heaven, or upon the earth during subsequent lives as well as in those in which the ceremonies were performed. We can more easily understand what Krishna meant if we will suppose him to be referring to a doctrine that in those days was precisely similar in its scheme of rewards to the old-fashioned Christian belief that, by following the Scriptures, one secured happiness and prosperity on earth and great bliss forever in heaven with the saints. This is declared by him to be a deluding doctrine. He does not say that the rewards as laid down will not follow the practice, but implies that they will. But as the wheel of rebirth will eternally revolve, drawing us inevitably back to a mortal body, we are continually deluded and never succeed in attaining to God – that being the goal for us all.

Heaven, whether it be that of the Christian or of the Hindu, is what Buddha called a thing or state that has a beginning and will have an end. It may, surely, last aeons of time, but it will come to an end, and then the weary task of treading the world – whether this or some other one – has to be recommenced. Hence Krishna said that men were deluded by those flowery sentences proclaiming a means of reaching heaven, than which there was nothing better.

Doubtless there are many students who, believing in the possibility of reaching heaven, say that they are willing to take the risk of what may happen after the enjoyment for such a long period is ended. But those risks would not be taken were they well understood. They are numerous and great. Many of them cannot be stated, because, in order to be understood at all, more must be known of the power of mind and the real meaning of meditation. But the ordinary risks are found in what we may roughly, for the present, call delayed karma and unspent affinities.

The power of these two has its root in the vast complexity of man's nature. Such is its complexity that a man cannot, as a complete being, ever enjoy heaven or any state short of union with the divine. Learned theosophists talk of a man's going to *devachan*, and of his being here on

earth suffering or enjoying karma, when as a fact only a small part of him is either here or there. When he has lived out his life and gone to *devachan*, the vast root of his being stands waiting in the One Life, waiting patiently for him to return and exhaust some more karma. That is, in any one life the ordinary man only takes up and exhausts what karma his bodily apparatus permits. Part of the power of karma is in the "mysterious power of meditation," which exhibits itself according to the particular corporeal body one has assumed. So the man may in this life perform "special ceremonies" and conform to texts and doctrine, attaining thereby the reward of heaven, and still have left over a quantity of that "mysterious power of meditation" unexpended; and what its complexion is he does not know. Its risk therefore is that it may be very bad, and, when he does return from heaven, his next body may furnish the needed apparatus to bring up to the front this mass of unexpended karma, and his next compensation might be a sojourn in hell.

In reassuming a body, the "mysterious power" spoken of reaches out to numberless affinities engendered in other lives, and takes hold of all that come in its reach. Other beings once known to the man arrive into incarnation at the same time, and bring into action affinities, attractions, and powers that can only act through them and him. Their influence cannot be calculated. It may be good or bad, and, just as he is swayed by them or as his sway the other being, so will work out the karma of each. Krishna therefore advises Arjuna to be free from the influence of the quality, so that he may obtain a *complete* release. And that freedom can only be attained, as he says, by means of devotion.

These effects, divergencies and swaying, are well known to occultists, and, although the idea is very new in the West, it is not unknown in India. This law is both an angel of mercy and a messenger of justice, for, while we have just stated its operation as among the risks, it is also a means whereby nature saves men often from damnation.

Suppose in some life long past I had a dear friend, or wife, or relative, with whom my intimacy was interior and deep. Death separates us, and in subsequent lives he devotes himself to truth, to wisdom, to the highest in him, while I go on careless of all but pleasure in the present. After many lives we meet again as either friends or

acquaintances. At once the old intimacy asserts itself, and my former friend – although maybe neither of us knows it – has a strange power to touch my inward life, and wakes me up to search for truth and my own soul. It is the unexpended affinity, and by its aid nature works my salvation.

Then we should both seek devotion. This devotion is what is inculcated by the Adepts to their *chela*s. It involves a mental abnegation not agreeable to our modern mind, but that must be acquired or real progress is impossible. We must by means of this mental devotion to the divine, which means abnegation of all the rest, dismiss all results of our actions. It is not ours to say what shall be the result of an action; the Law will bring about a result much better, perhaps, than we had imagined. If the results, if the passing daily circumstances, are not those we expected, then by means of devotion we accept them as just what the Law intended. But if we fix our desire on accomplishing even a seeming good result, we are bound by that desire, no matter whether our wish is accomplished or not.

This exhortation to devotion is at once the most simple and the most difficult. Some deride it because they want powers and "development"; others because they think it too simple; but the wise student, even when he cannot at first grasp its meaning, will revolve it in his mind, strive after it, and make it a thing to be attained by him.

We have seen that devotion must be attained by that student who desires to reach enlightenment. This is what is meant by Krishna's reply to Arjuna, at the conclusion of the second chapter.

> "When he has put away all desires which enter the heart, and is satisfied by the Self in himself, he is then said to be confirmed in spiritual knowledge. "

It is not possible to be wholly given up to the dictates of the Spirit while any desires that come into the heart are permitted to engross the attention.

Of course the person described here is one who has gone much higher in development than most of us have been able to. But we

ought to set up a high ideal at which to aim, for a low one gives a lower result at the expense of the same effort. We should not put before us an aim less than the highest merely because it seems that our success will not be as great as we think it ought to be. It is not so much the clearly perceived outward result that counts, as the motive, effort, and aim, for judgment is not passed upon us among the things of sense where human time exists, but in that larger sphere of being where time ceases, and where we are confronted by what *we are* and not by what we have done. That which we have done touches us only in mortal life among the delusions of material existence; but the motives with which we live our lives go to make up our greater being, our larger life, our truer self. Do actions we must, for no mortal can live without performing actions; those bring us back to earth for many weary incarnations, perhaps to final failure, unless the lesson is learned that they must be done with the right motive and the true aim. That stage reached, they affect us no more, for, like Krishna, we become the perfect performers of all action. And in so far as we purify and elevate the motive and the aim, we become spiritually enlightened, reaching in time the power to see what should be done and what refrained from.

Many would-be occultists leave out of sight this chapter's teaching. Devotion has no charms for them; they leave it to those who would be good men, no matter what their creed or philosophy, and attention is paid to reading books, either new or old, upon magic, upon ceremonial, or any other of the manifold delusions. Nor is this erroneous practice newly risen. It was common among the alchemists, and the result in some cases is that students now waste valuable years in mastering ceremonial, Rosicrucianism, talismanic lore, and what not, as laid down in the books, while all of it is either useless mental lumber or positively dangerous.

I do not mean it to be understood that there never was real Rosicrucianism, or that ceremonial magic yields no results, or that there is no science of talismans. There are realities of which these, as now known, are shadows. But we might as well expect to find the soul by attentively studying the body, as to know the truths behind the influence of talismans or ceremonial magic by studying the books now extant upon those subjects. The mediæval so-called magicians have left a mass of writings that are now a delusion and a snare for students,

theosophical and nontheosophical. In these are minute directions for various sorts of practices, but they are all the attempts of men to enable mortals, by methods altogether outward, to control the astral or natural world. Success did not come to these practitioners, nor will much else save failure be the portion of those of our own day who follow their directions. In most cases of the old European so-called sorcerers and writers on magic, their published lucubrations are only salves to disappointed vanity; in the rest, mere reduplications of formulae left by their predecessors. Paracelsus positively declares that true magic is within the man — a part of his inner nature, potential at first, active after development, and that ceremonies or formulae are the veriest rubbish unless the person using them is himself a magician.

In the practice of ceremonial magic, where certain geometrical and other figures are to be used with the aid of prayers and invocations, there lies positive danger. This danger is increased if the student follows the practice for the sake of gain or glory or power or mere wonder seeking – all of these being selfish. In this ceremonial the operator, or self-styled magus, surrounds himself with a circle or an arrangement of triangles, the use and purpose of which are to protect him from whatever sprites he may arouse. Mark that well! It is for *protection*. Protection of this sort would not be needed or thought of unless a fear lurked inside that the shades or demons had power to hurt. So at the outset, fear, the product of ignorance, is fully present. The next important thing to be noted is that a sword has to enter into the conjuration. This is advised because the demons are said to fear sharp steel. Now Jesus said that he who lived by the sword should perish by the sword. By this he meant just what we are talking about. Ceremonial magic involves at almost every step the use of a sword. After the invocator or magus has used the ceremonial, say with success, for some time, he at last creates within his aura, or what Swedenborg called his sphere, a duplicate of what he had previously used and pictured on the floor or walls. In this he is no longer master, for, it being placed in that part of his nature of which he is ignorant, the sword of metal becomes an astral sword with the handle held by the demons or influences he unwisely raised. They then attack him where no defense can be interposed – on the astral and mental planes, and, just as surely as the wise man's words were uttered, he at last

perishes by the weapon he himself used. This danger, thus roughly outlined, is no mere figment of the brain. It is positive, actual, immanent in the practice. No book study will give a man the power to make the constitutional changes, as well as psychical alterations, needed before he is commander of immaterial forces. But these latter may be temporarily evoked and made acquainted with us by pursuing certain methods. That is the beginning. Their turn is sure to come, and, obeying a law of their nature, they take what has sometimes been called their "revenge." For all such practices call only upon the lower, unspiritual part of our nature, and that clothes such beings with corresponding attributes. Their "revenge" consists in bringing on inflammations in the moral character which will eventuate in a development of evil passions, atrophy of concentration, destruction of memory, ending at last in a miserable conclusion to life, and almost total failure to use the opportunities for progress presented by that incarnation. Therefore I said, it is all either useless mental lumber or positively dangerous.

In history and in our own experience there is abundant evidence that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is right in saying "spiritual knowledge includes every action without exception," and that it is to be attained by means of devotion. Ignorant men who had no access to books have by their inward sense perceived the real truth of things, not only those round about them, but relating to the larger concerns of nature. Jacob Boehme was wholly unlettered, but he knew the truth. His writings show an acquaintance, not to be then gained from books, with the true doctrines found in the Hindu scriptures and secret books. In Germany today are men known to me, who, more unlearned yet than Jacob Boehme was, know many things still mysteries for our learned theosophists who can boast of college education. The reason is that these men have attained to devotion, and thereby cleared away from before the eye of the soul the clouds of sense whose shadows obscure our view of truth. I do not decry or despise learning; it is a great possession; but if the learned man were also a devoted one in the sense of the *Bhagavad-Gita,* how much wider would be the sweep of his intellection no one could calculate.

Learning of the human sort is not despised among the highest occultists, even among the adepts. They use it and acquire it. They

accumulate *the record* of the experiences of seers and devoted men of small learning for long periods of time, until a great master of both learning and devotion arises who, by reason of his profound knowledge joined to devotion, can make the wonderful deductions in the possession of the Lodge respecting matters so far beyond us that they can with difficulty be imagined. But this again proves that devotion is the first and best, for these extraordinary Masters would not appear unless devotion had been the aim of their existence.

Without devotion a vast confusion arises within us that has been likened by some to a whirling motion, by others to the inrushing, overpowering flow of turbid waters. Boehme calls it in some aspects the *turba.* It is the delusion produced by the senses. And so Krishna, in closing the second lecture, says:

> "Let a man, restraining all these, remain in devotion when at rest, and intent on me alone; for he whose senses are under his control possesses spiritual knowledge. Attachment to objects of sense arises in a man who meditates upon them; from attachment arises desire; from desire passion springs up; from passion comes bewilderment; from bewilderment, confusion of the memory; from confusion of the memory, destruction of the intellect; from destruction of the intellect he perishes.

But he who approaches the objects of sense with senses free from love and hate and beneath his own control, having his soul well-disposed, attains to tranquility of thought. In this tranquillity there springs up in him a separation from all troubles. For the mind of him whose thoughts are tranquil soon becomes perfect in concentration. "

A very beautiful portion of the *Sanatsujatiya* may be read with profit here.[119]

> "Some say, that freedom from death results from action; and others that death exists not. Hear me explain, O King! have no misgiving about it.
>
> "Both truths, O Kshatriya, have been current from the beginning. The wise maintain what is called delusion to be death. I verily call heedlessness death, and likewise I

[119] *Sanatsujatiya* Ch. 2.

> call freedom from heedlessness immortality. Through heedlessness, verily, were the demons vanquished; and through freedom from heedlessness the gods attained to the Brahman. Death, verily, does not devour living creatures like a tiger; for, indeed, his form is not to be perceived. Heedlessness develops in men as desire, and afterwards as wrath, and in the shape of delusion. And then traveling in devious paths through egoism, one does not attain to union with the Self Those who are deluded by it, and who remain under its influence, depart from this world, and there again fall down [into generation]. Then the deities [i.e. the senses] gather around them. And then they undergo death after death. Being attached to the fruit of action, on action presenting itself, they follow after it, and do not cross beyond death. And the embodied self, in consequence of not understanding union with the real entity, proceeds on all hands with attachment to enjoyments. That, verily, is the great source of delusion to the senses: for by contact with unreal entities, his migrations are rendered inevitable; because, having his inner self contaminated by contact with unreal entities, he devotes himself to objects of sense on all sides, pondering on them only. That pondering, verily, first confuses him; and soon afterwards desire and wrath attack him. These lead children to death. But sensible men cross beyond death by their good sense. He who, pondering on the Self, destroys the fugitive objects of sense, not even thinking of them through contempt for them, and who, being possessed of knowledge, destroys desires in this way, becomes, as it were, the death of Death itself, and swallows it up."

The second chapter ends with a declaration of what is the sort of death that results in union with the divine, preventing absolutely any return to incarnations upon earth. It is found in the sentences:

> "That man who, casting off all desires, acts without attachment to results, free from egotism and selfishness, attains to tranquility. This is the condition of the Supreme Being, O son of Pritha! Having obtained this, one is not troubled; and remaining in it, even at the time

of death, he passes on to extinction (or union with) the Supreme Spirit. "

Those are the last words of the second chapter.

Any other mental attitude at the time of passing away will surely cause us to acquire a mortal body again.

Krishna's declaration brings up before us, not only the practices previously inculcated, but also the whole subject of death. For, in order to know how to "think of Him at the moment of death," or to have that tranquility which only perfection of devotion confers, we must find out what death is, and whether it is solely what we see going on at the decease of a human being, or more than can be gauged with the eye. A little reflection shows that what is seen and noted by physicians and spectators is but the withdrawal of the soul and energy from the outer envelope called "body." While that is going on, the person may accept rites of the church or profess adherence to any sort of doctrine whatever, even with his last outward sigh speak of heaven with its bliss awaiting him. But that is only the first step. It leaves his visible features calm and happy, perhaps, in expression; his relatives close his eyes — they call it death. He, however, has only begun to die. The soul has yet to pass through other envelopes beyond the ken of friends, beyond even the dying man's present control. All now depends upon the whole course and kind of thought in which he indulged during the life of the body. For the soul has to pass along the road by which it came, and that way is lined with the memories of a lifetime; as these memories rise up they affect the departing entity, causing it to be either disturbed from concentration on the Supreme Being, or assisting to a greater perfection. If, then, some few years only near the close of life were devoted to the sort of practice inculcated by Krishna, the memories of the years previously spent in following after desires will throw a cloud over the soul and absolutely prevent it from attaining that state from which return to earth is impossible without our consent. It is more perfectly illustrated by considering life as a grand musical movement that is brought to a close by using at once all the tones sounded throughout the whole preceding portion. The result will be a combined sound, expressing neither the highest nor lowest notes, or the sweetest or less sweet, but the resultant of all. And this last sound is the fixed vibration that governs the entity, sounding all

through him, and throwing him into the state to which it corresponds or of which it is the key. Thus it is easily seen that in each thought lie the possibilities of a harmony or a discord for life's conclusion.

> "Guided by the clear light of the soul, we have considered thy teachings, O holy sage! They have been efficacious for the removal of the obscurities surrounding Ishwara's abiding place in us; we are delighted and refreshed; may thy words remain with us, and, as a spring refreshes the earth, may we be refreshed by them!"

CHAPTER III
DEVOTION THROUGH THE RIGHT PERFORMANCE OF ACTION

The first two verses of this chapter express a doubt arising in Arjuna's mind, and contain a request for its solution and for a method by which he may attain perfect knowledge — salvation. They are:

> "If, according to thy opinion, O thou who givest all that men ask! the use of the understanding be superior to the practice of deeds, why then dost thou urge me to engage in an undertaking so dreadful as this?
>
> Thou, as it were, confoundest my reason with a mixture of sentiments; with certainty declare one method by which I may obtain happiness, and explain it unto me."

The doubt arose because the Blessed Lord had declared that Arjuna must reach salvation by the right use of his understanding, and yet also must perform the dreaded act of opposing, perhaps slaying, his friends, tutors, and relatives. The request is the same as is repeated nearly every day by serious students and for which an answer is demanded. [120] It is for *one* single method, *one* practice, *one* doctrine, by means of which the student may obtain that for which he seeks, whether he has formulated it as happiness or only as a thirst for wonderful knowledge and power.

Arjuna's doubt is the one which naturally arises in one who for the first time is brought face to face with the great duality of nature – or of God. This duality may be expressed metaphysically by the words *thought* and *action,* for these mean in this the same as *ideation* and *expression.* Brahman, as the unmanifested God, conceives the idea of the Universe, and it at once expresses itself in what is called creation by the Christian and by the scientist evolution. This creation or

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[120] See *Lucifer* of April and May, 1888, in articles "Practical Occultism" and "Occultism and the Occult Arts." – (Ed.) Both these articles were reprinted in the magazine *Theosophy* in Jan. 1913, issue. – (Publishers.)

evolution is the action of God. With him there is no difference in time between the arising of the idea and its expression in manifested objects. Coming down to consider the "created" objects, or the planes on which the thought of God has its expression through its own laws, we find the duality expressed by action and reaction, attraction and repulsion, day and night, outbreathing and inbreathing, and so on. When face to face with these, one is first confused by the multiplicity of objects, and we strive to find one simple thing, some law or doctrine, practice, dogma, or philosophy, by which, being known, happiness can be secured.

Although there *is* one single Vehicle, to use a Buddhist term, yet it cannot be grasped in the beginning by the student. He must pass through sufficient experience to give him a greater consciousness before he can understand this one *Vehicle.* Could that unique law be understood by the beginner, could it be possible to lift us by one word to the shining heights of power and usefulness, it is certain that Those who do know would gladly utter the word and give us the sole method, but as the only possible way in which we can get true happiness is by *becoming* and not by intellectually grasping any single system or dogma, the guardians of the lamp of truth have to raise men gradually from stage to stage. It was in such an attitude Arjuna stood when he uttered the verses with which this chapter opens. [121]

Krishna then proceeds to tell Arjuna that, it being impossible for one to remain in the world without performing actions, the right practice is to do those actions (duties of life whether in war or peace) which must be done, with a heart unattached to the result, being satisfied to do what is deemed the will of the Lord within, for no other reason than that it ought to be done. He sums it up in the words:

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[121] It is to be noticed that Arjuna and Krishna constantly change the names by which they address each other. When Krishna is dwelling on one subject or upon something that has to do with a particular phase of Arjuna's nature, he gives him some name that has reference to the quality, subject, or other matter referred to, and Arjuna changes the name of Krishna whenever he has need. As in these first verses, the name used for the Blessed Lord is Janardana, which means "giver of all that men ask" – meaning thereby to refer to Krishna's potency in bringing to fulfillment all wishes. – B

> "But he who, restraining his senses by his heart, and being free from attachment to the results of action, undertakes active devotion through the organs of action, is worthy of praise. "

This he illustrates by referring to those whom he calls "false pietists of bewildered soul," who remain inert with their bodies, restraining the organs of action, while at the same time they ponder on objects of sense which they have merely quitted in form. He thus shows the false position that it is useless to abandon the outer field of action while the mind remains attached to it, for such mental attachment will cause the ego to incarnate again and again upon earth. A little further on in the chapter he refers to a great yogi, one Janaka, who, even while a saint possessed of perfect knowledge which he had obtained while engaged in affairs of state, still performed actions.

These peculiar verses next occur:

> "The creator, when of old he had created mortals and appointed sacrifice, said to them, "By means of this sacrifice ye shall be propagated. It shall be to you a cow of plenty. By means of it do ye support the gods, and let these gods support you. Supporting one another mutually, ye shall obtain the highest felicity. For, being nourished by sacrifices, the gods will give you the desired food. He who eats the food given by them without first offering some to them, is a thief indeed."

At the outset I confess that these and succeeding verses do not appear easy to explain to Western minds. Although I have had some acquaintance with Occidental reasoning based on Occidental knowledge, it seems hopeless in the present century to elucidate much that is in this chapter. There are numerous points touched on by Krishna for which I find no response in Western thought. Among these are the verses on sacrifice. To say all I think about sacrifice would only expose me to a charge of madness, superstition, or ignorance; it certainly would on every hand be received with incredulity. And while sneers or disbelief have no terrors, it is needless to advert to certain points in the chapter. Yet in passing them by, some sadness is felt that a high civilization should on these subjects be so dense and dark. Although Moses established sacrifices for the Jews, the Christian

successors have abolished it both in spirit and letter, with a curious inconsistency which permits them to ignore the words of Jesus that "not one jot or tittle of the law should pass until all these things were fulfilled." With the culmination of the dark age [122] it was, however, natural that the last vestige of sacrifice should disappear. On the ruins of the altar has arisen the temple of the lower self, the shrine of the personal idea. In Europe individualism is somewhat tempered by various monarchical forms of government which do not by any means cure the evil; and in America, being totally unrestrained and forming in fact the basis of independence here, it has culminated. Its bad effects – vaguely as yet shadowing the horizon – might have been avoided if the doctrines of the Wisdom-religion had been also believed in by the founders of the republic. And so, after the sweeping away of the fetters forged by priestly dogma and kingly rule, we find springing up a superstition far worse than that which we have been used to call by the name. It is the superstition of materialism that bows down to a science which leads only to a negation.

There are, however, many willing minds here who have some intuition that after all there can be extracted from these ancient Hindu books more than is to be found if they are merely studied as a part of the lispings of infant humanity — the excuse given by Prof. Max Muller for translating them at all. It is to such natural theosophists I speak for they will see that, even while advancing so rapidly in material civilization, we need the pure philosophical and religious teachings found in the *Upanishads*.

The peculiar explanation of the Mosaic sacrifices advanced by the mystic, Count Saint-Martin [123], needs only a passing allusion. Students can think upon it and work out for themselves what truth it contains. He holds that the efficacy of the sacrifices rested in magnetic laws, for the priest, according to him, collected the bad effects of the sins of the people into his own person and then, by laying his hands upon the scapegoat (as in one sacrifice), communicated those deleterious

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[122] My readers may not agree with me that this is the dark age, inasmuch as that is the term applied to a period now past. That time, however, was a part of this, and this is even darker than that, as we think. – B

[123] See *Man: His Nature and Destiny* (1802). – B

influences to the poor animal who in the wilderness exhaled them so far away as not to affect the people. It is suggested that Moses knew something of occult laws, since he was educated by the Egyptians and initiated by them. But Saint-Martin goes on to say that the Jews were directed to kill even the animals in the land because the death of animals infected with the impure influences of those nations preserved the Jews from the poison; whereas in sacrifices the death of clean animals attracted wholesome preservative influences, [and that] pure and regular influences attached to certain classes and individuals of animals, and that *by breaking the bases in which they are fixed*they may become useful to man, and we should thus read *Lev*. xvii, 11: "It is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

He then says that the virtue of sacrifices comes through the rapport that man has with animals and nature; and, if the Jews had observed the sacrifices faithfully, they would never have been abandoned, but would have drawn upon themselves every good thing they were capable of receiving* *The extraordinary holocausts at the three great festivals were to bring down upon the people such active influences as corresponded to the epochs, for we see bulls, rams, and lambs always added to the burnt sacrifices [124] Some substances, mineral, vegetable, and animal, retain a greater proportion of the living and powerful properties of their first estate.

In these views Saint-Martin had some of the truth. But Moses ordained some sacrifices as a religious duty from sanitary reasons of his own, since the unthinking tribes would perform devotional acts willingly which, if imposed only as hygienic measures, they might omit. (1) The burnt offerings were, however, founded upon different views, very like those at the bottom of Hindu sacrifices, and the law of which is stated in these words from our chapter:

> "Beings are nourished by food. Food has its origin from rain. Rain is the fruit of sacrifice. Sacrifice is performed by action. "

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[124] In India there are numerous religious observances having in view sanitary effects. For instance the cholera dance – a religious matter – in which, while disinfecting camphor is burned in heaps, a curious flower-umbrella-dance is engaged in with religious chants and music. – B

It is not contended by either Brahmins or their followers that food will not be produced except from sacrifice performed according to Vedic ritual, but that *right food,* productive in the physical organism of the proper conditions enabling man to live up to his highest possibilities, alone is produced in that age where the real sacrifices are properly performed. In other places and ages food is produced, but it does not in everything come up to the required standard. In this age we have to submit to these difficulties, and can overcome them by following Krishna's instructions as given in this book. In a verse just quoted the distinction is made between food naturally produced without, and that due to, sacrifice, for he says, "For, being nourished by sacrifices, the gods will give you the *desired* food." Carrying out the argument, we find as a conclusion that if the sacrifices which thus nourish the gods are omitted, these "gods" must die or go to other spheres. And as we know that sacrifices are totally disused now, the "gods" spoken of must have long ago left this sphere. It is necessary to ask what and who they are. They are not the mere idols and imaginary beings so constantly mentioned in the indictments brought against India by missionaries, but are certain powers and properties of nature which leave the world when the Kali-yuga or dark age, as this is called, has fully set in. Sacrifices therefore among us would be useless just at present.

There is, however, another meaning to the "revolution of the wheel" spoken of by Krishna. He makes it very clear that he refers to the principle of reciprocity or brotherhood. And this he declares must be kept revolving; that is, each being must live according to that rule, or else he lives a life of sin to no purpose. And we can easily believe that in these days this principle, while admired as a fine theory, is not that which moves the people. They are, on the contrary, spurred by the personal selfish idea of each one becoming better, greater, richer than his neighbor. If continued unchecked it would make this nation one entirely of black magicians. And it was to counteract this that the Theosophical Society was founded, with the object of inducing men to once more revolve this wheel of brotherly love first set in motion by the "creator when of old he had created mortals."

Krishna then proceeds to exhort Arjuna again to perform the duties appointed to him, and urges him to do it on the ground that he being a

great man should set a good example that the lower orders would follow; saying,

> "He who understands the whole universe should not cause these people, slow and ignorant of the universe, to relapse from their duty. "

Knowing that, under the great cyclic laws which govern us, periods arrive even in the worst of ages when good examples of living imprinted on the astral light cause effects ever increasing in intensity, until at last the "gods" before referred to begin in distant spheres to feel the force of these good actions and to return again to help mankind on the recurrence of a better age, he implores Arjuna to be the very first to set the good example.

In such an age as this, the ritualistic sacrifice of a different age which has indeed a magical effect becomes a sacrifice to be performed by each man in his own nature upon the altar of his own heart. And especially is this so with theosophists of sincerity and aspiration. Being born as we are in these days, among families with but small heritage in the wave of descent from unsullied ancestors, we are without the advantage of great natural spiritual leanings, and without certain peculiar powers and tendencies that belong to another cycle. But the very force and rapidity of the age we live in give us the power to do more now in fewer incarnations. Let us then recognize this, and learn what is our duty and do it. This portion of the chapter ends with a famous verse:

> "It is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well. Death is better in the performance of one's own duty. Another's duty is productive of danger."

Krishna having said to Arjuna that a certain class of men, being without faith, revile the true doctrine and perish at last, bewildered even by all their knowledge, Arjuna sees at once a difficulty growing out of a consideration of what, if anything, induces these men to sin as it were against their will. He sees in this the operation of an unknown

force that molds men in a manner that they would not allow if conscious of it, and he says:

> "Instigated by what does this man incur sin, even against his will, O descendant of Vrishni, impelled, as it were, by force? "

To this Krishna replies:

> "It is desire; it is passion springing from the quality of rajas, voracious, all-sinful. Know that it is hostile to man in this world. As fire is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust [125], as the foetus is involved in the womb, so is this universe surrounded by this quality. Knowledge is surrounded by this, and it is the constant enemy of the wise man — a fire which assumes any form it will, O son of Kunti! and is insatiable. Its empire is saidto be the senses, the heart, and the intellect. By means of these it surrounds knowledge and bewilders the soul. Therefore do thou, O best of Bharatas! in the first place, restraining thy senses, cast off this sinful impetus which devours spiritual knowledge and spiritual discernment.
>
> They say that the senses are great. The heart is greater than the senses. But intellect is greater than the heart, and that which is greater than intellect is He. Knowing that it is thus greater than the mind, strengthening thyself by thyself, do thou O great-armed one! slay this foe, which assumes any form it will and is intractable. "

Deep reflection upon this reply by the Great Lord of men shows us that the realm over which the influence of passion extends is much wider than we at first supposed. It is thought by many students that freedom can be quickly obtained as soon as they begin the study of occultism or the investigation of their inner being of which the outer is only a partial revealment. They enter upon the study full of hope, and,

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[125] The ancient form of mirror is here referred to. It was made of metal and highly burnished. Of course it was constantly liable to get rusty. And our own silvered mirror is liable also to cloud, owing to the oxidizing of the coating. – B

finding great relief and buoyancy, think that the victory is almost won. But the enemy spoken of, the obstruction, the taint, is present among a greater number of the factors that compose a being than is apparent.

Krishna has reference to the three qualities of *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.* The first is of the nature of truth, pure and bright; the second partakes of truth in a lesser degree, is of the nature of action, and has also in it the quality of badness; the third, *tamas,* is wholly bad, and its essential peculiarity is *indifference,* corresponding to darkness, in which no action of a pure quality is possible.

These three great divisions — or as it is in the Sanskrit, *gunas* — comprehend all the combinations of what we call "qualities," whether they be moral, mental, or physical.

This passion, or desire, spoken of in the chapter is composed of the two last qualities, *rajas* and *tamas.* As Krishna says, it is intractable. It is not possible, as some teach, to bring desire of this sort into our service. It must be slain. It is useless to try to use it as a helper, because its tendency is more towards *tamas,* that is, downward, than towards the other.

It is shown to surround even knowledge. It is present, to a greater or lesser degree, in every action. Hence the difficulty encountered by all men who set out to cultivate the highest that is in them.

We are at first inclined to suppose that the field of action of this quality is the senses alone; but Krishna teaches that its empire reaches beyond those and includes the heart and the intellect also. The incarnated soul desiring knowledge and freedom finds itself snared continually by *tamas,* which, ruling also in the heart and mind, is able to taint knowledge and thus bewilder the struggler.

Among the senses particularly, this force has sway. And the senses include all the psychical powers so much desired by those who study occultism. It does not at all follow that a man is spiritual or knows truth because he is able to see through vast distances, to perceive the denizens of the astral world, or to hear with the inner ear. In this part of the human economy the dark quality is peculiarly powerful. Error is more likely to be present there than elsewhere, and unless the seer is self-governed he gets no valuable knowledge, but is quite likely to fall at last, not only into far more grievous error, but into great wickedness.

We must therefore begin, as advised by Krishna, with that which is nearest to us, that is, with our senses. We cannot slay the foe there at first, because it is resident also in the heart and mind. By proceeding from the near to the more remote, we go forward with regularity and with certainty of conquest at last. Therefore he said, "In the first place, restrain thy senses." If we neglect those and devote ourselves wholly to the mind and heart, we really gain nothing, for the foe still remains undisturbed in the senses. By means of those, when we have devoted much time and care to the heart and mind, it may throw such obscurations and difficulties in the way that all the work done with the heart and mind is rendered useless.

It is by means of the outward senses and their inner counterparts that a great turmoil is set up in the whole system, which spreads to the heart and from there to the mind, and, as it is elsewhere said: "The restless heart then snatches away the mind from its steady place."

We thus have to carry on the cultivation of the soul by regular stages, never neglecting one part at the expense of another. Krishna advises his friend to restrain the senses, and then to "strengthen himself by himself." The meaning here is that he is to rely upon the One Consciousness which, as differentiated in a man, is his higher self. By means of this higher self he is to strengthen the lower, or that which he is accustomed to call "myself."

It will not be amiss here to quote from some notes of conversation with a friend of mine.

> "Our consciousness is one and not many, nor different from other consciousnesses. It is not waking consciousness or sleeping consciousness, or any other but consciousness itself.
>
> "Now that which I have called consciousness is Being. The ancient division was:
>
> *Sat*, or *Being;*
>
> *Chit,* or Consciousness, Mind; } These together are called *Sat-chit-ananda.*
>
> *Ananda*, or *Bliss.*
>
> "But *Sat* – or Being – the first of the three, is itself both

Chit and *Ananda*. The appearing together in full harmony of Being and Consciousness is Bliss or *Ananda*. Hence that harmony is called *Sat-chit-ananda*.

"But the one consciousness of each person is the Witness or Spectator of the actions and experiences of every state we are in or pass through. It therefore follows that the waking condition of the mind is not separate consciousness.

"The one consciousness pierces up and down through all the states or planes of Being, and serves to uphold the memory – whether complete or incomplete – of each state's experiences.

"Thus in waking life, *Sat* experiences fully and knows. In dream state, *Sat* again knows and sees what goes on there, while there may not be in the brain a complete memory of the waking state just quitted. In *Sushupti* – beyond dream and yet on indefinitely, *Sat* still knows all that is done or heard or seen.

"The way to salvation must be entered. To take the first step raises the possibility of success. Hence it is said, 'When the first attainment has been won, *Moksha* (salvation) has been won.'

"The first step is giving up bad associations and getting a longing for knowledge of God; the second is joining good company, listening to their teachings and practicing them; the third is strengthening the first two attainments, having faith and continuing in it. Whoever dies thus, lays the sure foundation for ascent to adeptship, or salvation."

We have come to the end of the third chapter, which is that upon *Devotion through Action,* or in Sanskrit, *Karma-yoga.* It has in these three chapters been distinctly taught that devotion must be obtained, sought after, desired, cultivated. The disciple must learn to do every act with the Divine in view, and the Divine in everything. As it is said in the *Brihad Nundèkèshwar-Purâna:*

> While taking medicine one should think of Vishnu or the all-pervading; while eating, of Janârdana, the All-Giver; while lying down, of Padmanabha; while marrying, of Prajapati, the Lord of Creatures; while fighting, of Chakradhara; while traveling in a foreign land, of Trivikrama; at the time of death, of Narayana; at the time of reunion with friends, of Sridhara; after dreaming bad dreams, of Govinda; at the time of danger, of Madhusudana; in the midst of a forest, of Narasinha; in the midst of fire, of Jalasaya, or the one lying on the water; in the midst of water, of Varaha; on the mountain, of Raghunandana; while going, of Vaurana; and in all acts, of Madhava.

All these names are the names of Vishnu in his various powers and appearances. It is seeing Krishna in everything, and everything in him. This at last we must do, for Isvara, the spirit in each of us, is none other than Krishna. Therefore let us think of him and fight; while entangled in this dense forest of existence, let us think of him, the Lion our guard, the Sage our guide, the Warrior our sure defense and shield.

CHAPTER IV
DEVOTION THROUGH SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

In the third chapter Krishna approached the subject of *yoga* – or union with the Supreme and the method of attainment – and now in the fourth openly speaks of it. He had told Arjuna that passion is greater than either heart or mind, having power to overthrow them, and advised Arjuna to strengthen his hold on his real self, for by means of that only could he hope to overcome passion.

In the opening of this chapter we come across something of importance – the doctrine that in the early part of a new creation, called manvantara in Sanskrit, a great Being descends among men and imparts certain ideas and aspirations which reverberate all through the succeeding ages until the day when the general dissolution – the night of Brahma – comes on. He says:

> "This deathless Yoga, this deep union,
> I taught Vivaswata, the Lord of Light;
> Vivaswata to Manu gave it; he
> To Ikshvaku; so passed it down the line
> Of all my royal Rishis. Then, with years,
> The truth grew dim and perished, noble
> Prince!
> Now once again to thee it is declared –
> This ancient lore,this mystery supreme –
> Seeing I find thee votary and friend."

Exoteric authorities agree that Vivasvat is a name for the sun; that after him came Manu, and his son was Ikshvaku. The latter founded the line of Solar Kings, who in early times in India were men of supreme knowledge. They were adepts every one, and ruled the land as only adepts could, for the darker ages had not come on, and such great Beings could naturally live among men. Everyone respected them, and there was no rebellion even in thought, since there could be no occasion for complaint. Although Vivasvat as a name for the sun reveals nothing to our Western ears, there is a great truth hidden behind it, just as today there is as great a mystery behind our solar orb.

He was the Being appointed to help and guide the race at its beginning. He had himself, ages before, gone through incarnation during other creations, and had mounted step by step up the long ladder of evolution, until by natural right he had become as a god. The same process is going on today, preparing some Being for similar work in ages to come. And it has gone on in the limitless past also; and always the Supreme Spirit as Krishna teaches the Being, so that he may implant those ideas necessary for our salvation. After the race has grown sufficiently, the Being called the Sun leaves the spiritual succession to Manu – whether we know him by that name or another – who carries on the work until men have arrived at the point where they furnish out of the great mass some one of their own number who is capable of founding a line of Kingly Priest Rulers; then Manu retires, leaving the succession in the hands of the Royal Sage, who transmits it to his successors. This succession lasts until the age no longer will permit, and then all things grow confused spiritually, material progress increases, and the dark age, fully come, ushers in the time before dissolution. Such is the present time.

Up to the period marked by the first earthly king called Ikshvaku, the ruler was a spiritual Being whom all men knew to be such, for his power, glory, benevolence, and wisdom were evident. He lived an immense number of years, and taught men not only *yoga* but also arts and sciences. The ideas implanted then, having been set in motion by one who knew all the laws, remain as *inherent ideas* to this day. Thus it is seen that there is no foundation for the pride of ideas felt by so many of us. They are not original. We never would have evolved them ourselves, unaided; and had it not been for the great wisdom of these planetary spirits in the beginning of things, we would be hopelessly drifting now.

The fables in every nation and race about great personages, heroes, magicians, gods, who dwelt among them in the beginning, living long lives, are due to the causes I have outlined. And in spite of all the sneers and labored efforts of scientific scoffers to show that there is no soul, and perhaps no hereafter, the innate belief in the Supreme, in heaven, hell, magic, and what not, will remain. They are preserved by the uneducated masses, who, having no scholastic theories to divert their minds, keep up what is left of the succession of ideas.

Arjuna is surprised to hear one whose birth he knew of declaring that Vivaswat was his contemporary, and so asks Krishna how that can happen. Krishna replies, asserting that he and Arjuna had had countless rebirths which he saw and recollected, but Arjuna, being not yet perfect in *yoga*, knew not his births, could not remember them. As in the poem Arjuna is also called *Nara*, which means *Man*, we here have an ancient postulation of reincarnation for all the human family in direct and unmistakable words. Then very naturally he opens the doctrine, well known in India, of the reappearances of *Avatar*s. There is some little dispute among the Hindus as to what an *Avatar* is; that is, whether he is the Supreme Spirit itself or only a man overshadowed by the Supreme to a greater extent than other men. But all admit that the true doctrine is stated by Krishna in the words:

" I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness
Declines, O Bharata! when Wickedness
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take
Visible shape, and move a man with men,
Succouring the good, thrusting the evil back,
And setting Virtue on her seat again. "

These appearances among men for the purpose of restoring the equilibrium are not the same as the rule of Vivaswata and Manu first spoken of, but are the coming to earth of *Avatar*s or Saviors. That there is a periodicity to them is stated in the words "from age to age." He is here speaking of the great cycles about which hitherto the Masters have been silent except to say that there are such great cycles. It is very generally admitted now that the cyclic law is of the highest importance in the consideration of the great questions of evolution and man's destiny. But the coming of an *Avatar* must be strictly in accordance with natural law – and that law demands that at the time of such an event there also appears a being who represents the other pole – for, as Krishna says, the great law of the two opposites is eternally present in the world. So we find in the history of India that, when Krishna appeared so long ago, there was also a great tyrant, a black magician named Kansa, whose wickedness equaled the goodness of Krishna. And to such a possibility the poem refers, where it says that Krishna comes when wickedness has reached a maximum development. The real meaning of this is that the bad karma of the world goes on

increasing with the lapse of the ages, producing at last a creature who is, so to say, the very flower of all the wickedness of the past, counting from the last preceding *Avatar*. He is not only wicked, but also wise, with magic powers of awful scope, for magic is not alone the heritage of the good. The number of magicians developed among the nations at such a time is very great, but one towers above them all, making the rest pay tribute. It is not a fairy tale but a sober truth, and the present prevalence of self-seeking and money-getting is exactly the sort of training of certain qualities that black magicians will exemplify in ages to come. Then Krishna – or howsoever named – appears "in visible shape, a man with men." His power is as great as the evil one, but he has on his side what the others have not – spirit, preservative, conservative forces. With these he is able to engage in conflict with the black magicians, and in it is assisted by all of us who are really devoted to brotherhood. The result is a victory for the good and destruction for the wicked. The latter lose all chance of salvation in that manvantara, and are precipitated to the lower planes, on which they emerge at the beginning of the next new creation. So not even they are lost, and of their final salvation Krishna speaks thus:

> "Whoso worship me,
> Them I exalt; *but all men everywhere*
> *Shall fall into my path;* albeit, those souls
> Which seek reward for works, make sacrifice
> Now, to the lower gods. "

He also declares that the right and full comprehension of the mystery of his births and work on earth confers upon us nirvana, so that rebirth occurs no more. This is because it is not possible for a man to understand the mystery unless he has completely liberated himself from the chains of passion and acquired entire concentration. He has learned to look beneath the shell of appearances that deceives the unthinking mind.

This brings us to a rock upon which many persons fall to pieces. It is personality. Personality is always an illusion, a false picture hiding the reality inside. No person is able to make his bodily environment correspond exactly to the best that is within him, and others therefore continually judge him by the outward show. If we try, as Krishna directs, to find the divine in everything, we will soon learn not to judge

by appearances, and if we follow the advice given in this chapter to do our duty without hope of reward and without trimming ourselves with a desired result in view, the end will be peace.

Krishna then adverts to various systems of religious practice, and shows Arjuna that they all lead at last, but after many births, to him, by reason of the tendency set up. The different schools are taken up in a few sentences. His dictum is that they "destroy sins," meaning that a certain purification of the nature is thus accomplished, which is followed upon death by a longer stay in devachan, but it is only to one single practice he awards the distinction of being that which will bring about union with the Supreme Spirit. After enumerating all, not only the performance but also the omitting of sacrifice, he shows Arjuna that spiritual knowledge includes all actions and burns to ashes the binding effects of all work, conferring upon us the power to take nirvana by reason of emancipation from the delusion that the lower self was the actor. The perfection of this spiritual knowledge is reached by strengthening faith and expelling doubt through devotion and restraint. Then occurs a verse, almost the same as one in the New Testament, "the man of doubtful mind enjoys neither this world nor the other, nor final beatitude."

He that, being self-contained, hath vanquished doubt,
Disparting self from service, soul from works,
Enlightened and emancipate, my Prince!
Works fetter him no more! Cut then atwain
With sword of wisdom, Son of Bharata!
This doubt that binds thy heart-beats! cleave the bond.
Born of thy ignorance! Be bold and wise!
Give thyself to the field with me! Arise!

These strong words end the chapter. They are addressed to those who can be strong, and not to the ever-doubting one who believes neither his own thoughts nor the words of others, but who is forever asking for more. But there can be no uncertainty about the cause of doubt. As Krishna says:

"It springs from ignorance, and all we have to do is to take the sword of knowledge and cut all doubts at once." Many will say that they have been always looking for this that they may have peace, and that so many systems are presented for their consideration they are unable to come to any conclusion whatever. This would seem very true on a view of the thousand and one philosophies placed before us with varying degrees of clearness by the exponents of them. But it has appeared to us that they can all be easily sifted and divided into classes where they will range themselves under two great heads – those which permit nothing to be believed until the miserable mass of mediocre minds have said that they at last accept this or that, and those which have each a little of what may possibly be true and a great deal that is undeniable nonsense. The doubter is a devotee of the first school, or he is an adherent partly of one and partly of the other; and in the latter case is torn almost asunder by the numberless conventional ideas which bear the stamp of authority coercing him into an acceptance of that which revolts his judgment whenever he permits it to have free exercise. If you tell him that the much-lauded mind is not the final judge, and that there are higher faculties which may be exercised for the acquirement of knowledge, he disputes on the lines laid down by learned professors of one school or another, and denies the validity of proofs offered on the ground that they are instances of "double cerebration," and what not.

To such as these the chapter will not appeal, but there are many students who have sincere doubts, and with those the difficulty arises from ignorance. They are afraid to admit to themselves that the ancients could have found out the truth; and the reason would appear to be that this judgment is passed from a consideration of the merely material state of those people or of the present nations who in any degree follow such philosophies. Our civilization glorifies material possessions and progress, and those who have not these boons cannot be the possessors of either truth or the way to it. But the keepers of truth have never said that we will be neither rich nor civilized if we follow their system. On the contrary, in the days when Krishna lived and taught his system there was more material glory and power than now, and more knowledge of all the laws of nature than every one of our scientists put together have in their reach. Hence if anyone teaches

that the reign of the doctrines of the Masters will be the knell of all material comfort and progress, he errs, and sows the seeds of trouble for himself and his friends. Why, then, is it not wise to at once admit that there may be truth in these doctrines, throw away all doubt, and enjoy the light coming from the East?

So long as doubt remains there will be no peace, no certainty, nor any hope of finding it in this world or the lives upon it hereafter, and not even in the vast reaches of other universes on which we may live in future ages; the doubter now will be the doubter then, and so on while the wheel revolves for the millions of years yet before us.

If we follow the advice of the great Prince, our next step will be to assume, in view of patent facts of evolution, that certain great Beings exist who long ago must have trod the same road, and now possess the knowledge with the power to impart as much as we are able to take. To this Krishna refers in these words:

> "Seek this knowledge by doing honor, by prostration, by strong search, and by service; those gifted with this knowledge, who perceive the truth of things, will teach this knowledge to thee."

And such are the exact words of the Masters. They do not reward or teach merely because we so wish it to be, nor because we value ourselves at so much; our valuation of ourselves is not theirs. They value us at the real and just rate, and cannot be moved by tears or entreaties not followed by acts, and the acts that delight them are those performed in their service, and no others.

What, then, is the work in which they wish to be served?

It is not the cultivation of our psychic powers, nor the ability to make phenomena, nor any kind of work for self when that is the sole motive.

The service and the work are in the cause of humanity, by whomsoever performed, whether by members of the Theosophical Society or by those outside of it. And all the expectant members of the Society now standing with their mouths open, waiting for what they are pleased to call food, may as well know that they will get nothing unless the work is done or attempted.

Let this right attitude be taken, and what follows is described in this chapter:

> "A man who perfects himself in devotion finds springing up in himself in the progress of time this spiritual knowledge, which is superior to and comprehends every action without exception. "

The fourth chapter is ended. Let all our doubts come to an end!

> "What room for doubt and what for sorrow can there be in him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind, differing only in degree."

CHAPTER V
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF RENUNCIATION OF ACTION

The name of this chapter in Sanskrit is "Karmasanyasayog," which means "The Book of Religion by Renouncing Fruit of Works." It has always seemed to me to be one of the most important in the *Bhagavad-Gita.* As the poem is divided into eighteen parts, this one is just beyond the first division, for the whole number are to be put into six groups of three chapters each, and we have finished four.

Arjuna is supposed to bring forward the objections raised by, or views belonging to, the two great Indian schools called the Sankhya and the Yoga, one of which advised its votaries to renounce all works and to do nothing whatever, while the other called for the performance of works. The divergent views naturally caused great differences in practice, for the followers of one would be found continually working, and those of the other continually doing nothing. Hence we find, in India, even at the present day, great numbers of ascetics who remain inert, and encounter on the other hand those who go on making karma with a view to salvation.

A very little reflection will show the student that the only result of action, as such, will be a continuation of action, and hence that no amount of mere works will in themselves confer nirvana or rest from karma. The only direct product of karma is karma. And this difficulty rose before Arjuna in the fifth conversation. He says:

> Thou praisest, Krishna, the renunciation of works; on the other hand, devotion through them. Declare to me with precision that one only which is the better of these two.

Whereupon Krishna replies:

> To cease from works
> Is well, and to do works in holiness
> Is well; and both conduct to bliss supreme;
> But of these twain the better way is his
> Who working piously refraineth not.

That is the true Renouncer, firm and fixed,
Who – seeking nought, rejecting nought – dwells proof
Against the "opposites."

The meaning of the teacher has been by some suggested to be that, inasmuch as the life of the ascetic is very hard, almost impossible for the majority of men, it is wiser to now perform good acts in the hope that they will lead one hereafter to a favorable birth in such surroundings that complete renunciation of action – outwardly – will be an easy task, and that the two sorts of practice were not intended to be laid before the student for selection, nor is he put in a dilemma compelling him to choose. I think such is not the meaning, but that, on the contrary, the seemingly easy alternative of performing actions properly is in reality the most difficult of all tasks. And no matter how much we may wait for a favorable birth, for a much hoped-for environment which will not only permit the new sort of life but, in fact, urge it upon us, it will never arrive for us until we have learned what is the right performance of action. This learning can never be acquired by a renunciation of works now. Indeed, it may be taken for granted that no person will be able to renounce the world unless he has passed through the other experience in some life. A few may be found who attempt to do so, but if they have not been through all action they cannot proceed. The character of the man himself inwardly is the real test. No matter how many times during countless births he has renounced the world, if his inner nature has not renounced, he will be the same man during the entire period, and whenever, in any one of his ascetic lives, the new, the appropriate temptation or circumstance arises, he will fall from his high outward asceticism.

That our view as to the extreme difficulty of *right renunciation through action* is correct, we may refer to what Krishna says further on in the chapter.

Yet such abstraction, Chief!
Is hard to win without much holiness.

Krishna praises both schools, telling Arjuna that the disciples of each will arrive at a like end; but he says that right performance of action is the better. Now we must reconcile these two. If one is better than the other and yet both conduct to the same goal, there must be some

reason for making the comparison, or hopeless confusion results. Acting upon his apparent equal endorsement, many seekers have abandoned action, thereby hoping to gain salvation. They ignored the sixth verse, which reads:

> "O thou of mighty arms, it is difficult to attain true renunciation, *without right performance of action;* the devotee *rightly performing action attains to true renunciation* before long. "

Here again is a higher place assigned to performance of action. It seems clear that what Krishna meant was that renunciation of action in any one life, followed by the same conduct in all the subsequent lives thereby affected, would at last lead the renouncer to see how he must begin to stop that kind of renunciation and take up the performance of actions while he renounced the fruit of them. This is thought by many occultists to be the true view. It is well known that the ego returning to regeneration is affected by the actions of his previous births, not only circumstantially in the various vicissitudes of a life, but also in the tendency of the nature to any particular sort of religious practice, and this effect operates for a length of time or number of births exactly commensurate with the intensity of the previous practice. And naturally in the case of one who deliberately renounced all in the world, devoting himself to asceticism for many years, the effect would be felt for many lives and long after other temporary impressions had worn off. In going on thus for so many births, the man at last acquires that clearness of inner sight which brings him to perceive what method he really ought to follow. Besides also the natural development, he will be assisted by those minds whom he is sure to encounter, who have passed through all the needed experience. Additional support for these suggestions is found in the sixth chapter, in the verses referring to the rebirth of such disciples:

> So hath he back again what heights of heart
> He did achieve, and so he strives anew
> To perfectness, with better hope, dear Prince!
> *For by the old desire he is drawn on*
> *Unwittingly.* [126]

[126] The italics are my own. – B

What we are to endeavor to understand, then, is how to renounce the fruit of our actions, which is what Krishna means when he tells us to perform actions as a renunciation. The polluting effect of an act is not in the nature of the mere thing done, nor is the purifying result due to what work we may do, but on either hand the sin or the merit is found in the inner feeling that accompanies the act. One may donate millions in alms, and yet not thereby benefit his real character in the least. It is very true that he will reap material rewards, perhaps in some other life, but those even will be of no benefit, since he will be still the same. And another may only give away kind words or small sums, because that is all he has to give, and be so much benefited by the feeling accompanying each act that his progress up the ascending arc toward union with spirit is rapid. We find in the Christian Testament Jesus of Nazareth enforcing this view in the parable of the widow's mite, which he regarded as of more value than all that had been given by others. He could not have referred to the intrinsic value of the coin given, nor to the act as thus measured, for that quantity was easily ascertained; he only looked to the inner feeling of the poor woman when she gave all that she had.

No matter in what direction we see ourselves acting, we perceive how difficult it is to be true renouncers. And we cannot hope to reach the perfection of this better sort of renunciation through action, in the present life, be it the one in which we have begun, or be it the twentieth of such effort. However, we can *try*, and such is our duty; if we persevere, the tendency toward the right understanding will increase with each life more rapidly than would otherwise be possible.

And even in the high aim found in aspiration to discipleship under a master, or even to adeptship, we encounter the same difficulty. This aspiration is commendable above most that we can formulate, but when we coldly ask ourselves soon after that aspiration has been formed, "Why am I thus aspiring; why do I want to be near in sense to the Master?", we are obliged to admit that the impelling motive for acquiring the aspiration was tinged with selfishness. We can easily prove this by inquiring in the forum of our own conscience if we had the aspiration for ourself or for the great mass of men, rich and poor, despicable and noble; would we be able to feel content were we suddenly told that our deep longing had given the boon to others and

that we must wait ten lives more? It is safe to say that the answer would be that we were very sorry. In the twelfth verse we find the remedy for the difficulty, as well as the difficulty itself, clearly stated thus:

> "The right performer of action, abandoning fruit of action, attains to rest through devotion; the wrong performer of action, attached to fruit thereof on account of desire, remains bound."

These instructions will be very difficult for all who are living for themselves and who have not in some small degree begun to believe that they are not here for their own sake. But when we feel that there is no separation between us and any other creature, and that our higher self is leading us through all the experiences of life to the end that we shall recognize the unity of all, then, instead of continually acting contrary to that object of the Higher Self, we try to acquire the right belief and aspiration. Nor need we be deterred, as some are, by the extreme difficulty of eliminating the selfish desire for progress. That will be the task during many lives, and we should begin it voluntarily as soon as it is known, instead of waiting for it to be forced in upon us through suffering and many defeats.

A common mistake made by students is corrected in this chapter. It is the habit of many to say that, if these doctrines are followed to the letter, the result is a being who cares for nothing but the calmness which comes from extinction in the Supreme Spirit – that is, the extreme of selfishness. And popular writers contribute to this ridiculous impression, as we can see in the numerous articles on the subject. Among those writers it is the sequence of the "personal aggrandizement idea," which is the bane of the present age, as occultists think, but the chief beauty of it in the eyes of those to whom we refer. Krishna puts it clearly enough in the twenty-fifth verse:

> "Effacement in the Supreme Spirit is gained by the right-seeing sage whose sins are exhausted, who hath cut asunder all doubts, whose senses and organs are under control, and *who is devoted to the well-being of all creatures.*"

If the last qualification is absent, then he is not a "right-seeing sage" and cannot reach union with the Supreme. It must follow that the humblest imitator, everyone who desires to come to that condition, must try to the best of his ability to imitate the sage who has succeeded. And such is the word of the Master; for he says in many places that, if we expect to have his help, we must apply ourselves to the work of helping humanity – to the extent of our ability. No more than this is demanded.

CHAPTER VI
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SELF-RESTRAINT

More than one subject is treated in this chapter. It ends what I call the first series, as the whole eighteen chapters should be divided into three groups of six each.

Renunciation, equal-mindedness, true meditation, the golden mean in action, the unity of all things, the nature of rebirth and the effect of devotion upon it and devachan, are all touched upon.

It is a most practical chapter which would benefit students immensely if fully grasped and followed. The mistakes made many thousand years ago by disciples were the same as those of today. Today, just as then, there are those who think true renunciation consists in doing nothing except for themselves, in retiring from active duties, and in devoting their attention to what they are pleased to call self-development. On the other hand are those who mistake incessant action for true devotion. The true path is between these two.

The forsaking of worldly action – called *sannyas* – is the same as what is known in Europe as the monastic life, especially in some very ascetic orders. Adopted selfishly under a mistaken notion of duty it cannot be true devotion. It is merely an attempt to save oneself. The course adopted by some theosophical students very much resembles this erroneous method, although it is practiced in the freedom of the world and not behind monastery walls.

To be a true renouncer of action and a devotee one must put the problem on another plane. On the physical brain plane there is no way of reconciling a contradiction such as appears to exist in the direction to perform actions and yet renounce their performance. It is exactly here that many readers of the *Bhagavad-Gita* stop and are confused. They have for so long been accustomed to thinking of the physical and living in it, the terms used for their thought are so material in their application, that, seeing this contradiction, they say that the book will not benefit them. But considering the difficulty from the view that the real actor is the mind, that acts are not the dead outward expressions

of them, but are the thoughts themselves, we can see how one can be both a renouncer and a devotee, how we can outwardly perform every action, multitudes of them, being as active as anyone who is wrapped up in worldly pursuits, and yet be ourselves unattached and unaffected.

Duty and the final imperative – the "what ought I to do" – comes in here and becomes a part of the process. The actions to be performed are not any and every one. We are not to go on heedlessly and indiscriminately doing everything that is suggested. We must discover what actions ought to be performed by us and do them for that reason and not because of some result we expect to follow. The fact that we may be perfectly certain of the result is no reason for allowing our interest to fasten upon that. Here again is where certain theosophists think they have a great difficulty. They say that knowing the result one is sure to become interested in it. But this is the very task to be essayed — to so hold one's mind and desires as not to be attached to the result.

By pursuing this practice true meditation is begun and will soon become permanent. For one who watches his thoughts and acts, so as to perform those that ought to be done, will acquire a concentration in time which will increase the power of real meditation. It is not meditation to stare at a spot on the wall for a fixed period, or to remain for another space of time in a perfectly vacuous mental state which soon runs into sleep. All those things are merely forms which in the end will do no lasting good. But many students have run after these follies, ignoring the true way. The truth is that the right method is not easy; it requires thought and mental effort, with persistency and faith. Staring at spots and such miscalled occult practices are very easy in comparison with the former.

However, we are human and weak. As such we require help, for the outer self cannot succeed in the battle. So Krishna points out that the lower self is to be raised up by the help of the higher; that the lower is, as it were, the enemy of the higher, and we must not allow the worse to prevail. It will all depend upon self-mastery. The self below will continually drag down the man who is not self-conquered. This is because that lower one is so near the thick darkness that hangs about the lower rungs of evolution's ladder it is partly devil. Like a heavy weight it will drag into the depths the one who does not try to conquer

himself. But on its other side the self is near to divinity, and when conquered it becomes the friend and helper of the conqueror. The Sufis, the Mohammedan mystical sect, symbolize this in their poetry relating to the beautiful woman who appears but for a moment at the window and then disappears. She refuses to open the door to her lover as long as he refers to their being separate; but when he recognizes their unity then she becomes his firm friend.

The next few verses in the *Gîta* outline that which is extremely difficult – equal-mindedness, and intentness upon the Supreme Being in heat and cold, pleasure and pain, success and failure. We cannot reach to this easily, perhaps not in many lives, but we can try. Every effort we make in that direction will be preserved in the inner nature and cannot be lost at death. It is a spiritual gain, the riches laid up in heaven to which Jesus referred. To describe the perfection of equal-mindedness is to picture an adept of the highest degree, one who has passed beyond all worldly considerations and lives on higher planes. Gold and stones are the same to him. The objects he seeks to accomplish are not to be reached through gold, and so it and the pebbles have the same value. He is also so calm and free from delusion of mind and soul that he remains the same whether with enemies or friends, with the righteous or the sinners.

This high condition is therefore set before us as an ideal to be slowly but steadfastly striven after so that in the course of time we may come near it. If we never begin we will never accomplish, and it is far better to adopt this high ideal, even though failing constantly, than to have no ideal whatever.

But some are likely to make a mistake herein. Indeed they have done so. They set up the ideal, but in a too material and human manner. Then they thought to walk on the chosen path by outward observance, by pretending to regard gold and stones as the same to them, while in their hearts they preferred the gold. Their equal-mindedness they confined to other people's affairs, while they displeased and alarmed all relatives and friends by the manner of riding this hobby and by wrong neglect of obvious duty. Truly they sought for equal-mindedness, but failed to see that it can only be acquired through right performance of duty, and not by selecting the duties and environments that please us.

CHAPTER VII
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

This chapter is devoted to the question of that spiritual discernment by means of which the Supreme Spirit can be discerned in all things, and the absence of which causes a delusion constantly recurring, the producer of sorrow. Krishna says that this sort of knowledge leaves nothing else to be known, but that to attain it the heart – that is, every part of the nature – must be fixed on the Spirit, meditation has to be constant, and the Spirit made the refuge or abiding-place. He then goes on to show that to have attained to such a height is to be a *mahatma*.

> Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps *a single one knows me as I am.*

This points out the difficulty to be met in any one life, but is not cause for discouragement. It simply makes clear the fact, and thus also punctures the boastful claims of those who would pretend to have reached perfection but do not show it in their acts.

He then gives an eightfold division of his inferior nature, or that part of the Universal One which can be known. This is not the nature of man, and does not oppose the theosophical sevenfold system of human principles. No particular theosophical classification for the divisions of nature has been given out. It would, on the one hand, not be understood, and on the other, disputes leading to no good end would follow. He might as well have stated the twenty-fivefold division held by some other school. This "inferior nature" is only so relatively. It is the phenomenal and transient which disappears into the superior at the end of a *kalpa*. It is that part of God, or of the Self, which chose to assume the phenomenal and transient position, but is, in essence, as great as the superior nature. The inferiority is only relative. As soon as objective material, and subjective spiritual, worlds appear, the first-named has to be denominated inferior to the other, because the spiritual, being the permanent base, is in that sense superior; but as an absolute whole all is equal.

Included in the inferior nature are all the visible, tangible, invisible and intangible worlds; it is what we call nature. The invisible and intangible are nonetheless actual; we know that poisonous gas, though invisible and intangible, is fatally actual and potential.

Experiment and induction will confer a great deal of knowledge about the inferior nature of God and along that path the science of the modern West is treading, but before knowing the occult, hidden, intangible realms and forces – often called spiritual, but not so in fact – the inner astral senses and powers have to be developed and used. This development is not to be forced, as one would construct a machine for performing some operation, but will come in its own time as all our senses and powers have come. It is true that a good many are trying to force the process, but at last they will discover that human evolution is universal and not particular; one man cannot go very far beyond his race before the time.

Krishna points out to Arjuna a gulf between the inferior and the superior. This latter is the Knower and that which sustains the whole universe, and from it the inferior nature springs. So the materialistic and scientific investigator, the mere alchemist, the man who dives into the occult moved by the desire for gain to himself, will none of them be able to cross the gulf at all, because they do not admit the indwelling Spirit, the Knower.

The superior nature can be known because it is in fact the Knower who resides in every human being who has not degraded himself utterly. But this must be admitted before any approach to the light can be made. And but few are really willing, and many are unable, to admit the universal character of the Self. They sometimes think they do so by admitting the Self as present, as contiguous, as perhaps part tenant. This is not the admission, it leaves them still separate from the Self. All the phenomenal appearances, all the different names, and lives, and innumerable beings, are hung suspended, so to say, on the Self. Thus:

> And all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string.

A number of pre-eminently great and precious things and powers are here enumerated and declared to be the Self; while next the very

delusions and imperfections of life and man are included. Nothing is left out. This is certainly better than an illogical religion which separates God from the delusions and cruelties of nature, and then invents a third thing, in the person of a devil, who is the source of human wickedness. All this further accentuates the difficulties in the way. Krishna says the illusion is difficult to surmount, but that success can be attained by taking refuge in the Self – for he is the Self. The entire congregation of worshipers who are righteous find favor with the Self, but those who are spiritually wise are on the path that leads to the highest, which is the Self.

This means, as Krishna says, that those who with the eye of spiritual wisdom see that the Self is all, begin to reincarnate with that belief ingrained in them. Hitherto they had come back to earth without that single idea, but possessed of many desires and of ideas which separated them from the Self. Now they begin to return fully at rest in the Self and working out their long-accumulated karma. And at last they become what was mentioned in the opening verses, a *mahatma* or great soul.

There is, however, a large number of persons who are in the class which has been deprived of spiritual discernment "through diversity of desires" or who have not yet had discernment for the same reason. The verse reads as follows:

> Those who through diversity of desires are deprived of spiritual wisdom adopt particular rites subordinated to their own natures, and worship other Gods.

Although these words, like the rest of the colloquy, were spoken in India and to a Hindu, they are thoroughly applicable in the West. Every mode of thought and of living may be called a rite gone over by each one as his conscious or unconscious religion. A man adopts that which is conformable, or subordinate, to his own nature, and being full of desires he worships or follows other gods than the Supreme Self. In India the words would more particularly mean the worship, which is quite common, of idols among those who are not educated out of idolatry; but they would also mean what is said above. In the West these "other gods" are the various pleasures, objects, aims and modes of life and thought, be they religious or not, which the people adopt.

They have not the many thousands of gods of the Hindu pantheon, each one for some particular purpose, but it comes to the same thing. The idol-worshiper bows to the god visible so that he may attain the object of his heart which that god is supposed to control. The Western man worships his object and strives after it with all his heart and mind and thus worships something else than the Supreme Imperishable One. The god of one is political advancement, of another – and generally of most – the possession of great wealth. One great god is that of social advancement, the most foolish, hollow and unsatisfactory of all; and with it in America is yoked the god of money, for without wealth there is no social preeminence possible except in those cases where official position confers a temporary glory. The mother often spends sleepless nights inventing means for pushing her daughter into social success; the father lies wakefully calculating new problems for the production of money. The inheritors of riches bask in the radiance coming from their own gold, while they strive for new ways to make, if possible, another upward step on that road, founded on ashes and ending at the grave, which is called social greatness. And out of all this striving many and various desires spring up so that their multiplicity and diversity completely hide and obstruct all spiritual development and discernment.

But many who are not so carried away by these follies attend to some religion which they have adopted or been educated into. In very few cases, however, is the religion adopted: it is born with the child; it is found with the family and is regularly fastened on as a garment. If in this religion, or cult, there is faith, then the Supreme Self, impartial and charitable, makes the faith strong and constant so that thereby objects are attained. In whatever way the devotee chooses to worship with faith it is the Supreme which, though ignored, brings about the results of faith.

A curious speculation rises here; it may be true, it may be not. It can be noticed that millions of prayers are recited every month addressed to the One God, all through Christendom, asking various favors. Millions were offered for the conversion to a better life of the Prince of Wales – they failed. The rain ceases and prayers are made, but the dryness continues. Candles are lighted and prayers said to stop the earthquake which is destroying the city – the quakings go on until the

impulse is ended and the city ruined. It is perfectly impossible to prove answers to prayer in enough cases to convince the thoughtful. Now the speculative thought is that perhaps the prayers offered to an unmanifested God have no effect, for to be effectual the Being appealed to must have a separate existence so as to be able to intervene in separated manifested things. Christians do not possess the statistics of results from prayer offered toGods in Oriental countries. The usual cases brought forward in the West are such as the orphan asylum, for which nothing is asked except in prayer. But in India they have institutions similarly – but not so lavishly – supported and no asking alone save to the particular patron god. It is a matter of strong, constant faith which carries the thoughts of the prayer into the receptive minds of other people, who are then moved by the subconscious injected thought to answer the request. Now if the prayer is offered to an unseen and unknown God the faith of the person is not firm, whereas perhaps in the case of the idol-worshiper or of the Roman Catholic addressing himself to the Mother of God with her image before him, the very presence of the representative is an aid to constancy in faith. All this applies of course to prayers for personal and selfish ends. But that prayer or aspiration which is for spiritual light and wisdom is the highest of all, no matter to whom or what addressed. All religions teach that sort of prayer; all others are selfish and spiritually useless.

Although the strength of the devotee's devotion and faith for any God or object is due entirely to the Supreme Self, no matter if the faith be foolish and the God false, yet the reward obtained is said to be temporary, transitory, sure to come to an end. But unlike Western religious systems this is declared to be a matter of law instead of being determined by sentiment or arbitrarily. The sentences in which I find this are as follows:

But the reward of such short-sighted men is temporary. Those who worship the Gods go to the Gods, and those who worship me come unto me.

Man, made of thought, occupant only of many bodies from time to time, is eternally thinking. His chains are through thought, his release due to nothing else. His mind is immediately tinted or altered by whatever object it is directed to. By this means the soul is enmeshed in the same thought or series of thoughts as is the mind. If the object be anything that is distinct from the Supreme Self then the mind is at once turned into that, becomes that, is tinted like that. This is one of the natural capacities of the mind. It is naturally clear and uncolored, as we would see if we were able to find one that had not gone through too many experiences. It is movable and quick, having a disposition to bound from one point to another. Several words would describe it. Chameleon-like it changes color, sponge-like it absorbs that to which it is applied, sieve-like it at once loses its former color and shape the moment a different object is taken up. Thus, full of joy from an appropriate cause, it may suddenly become gloomy or morose upon the approach of that which is sorrowful or gloomy. We can therefore say it becomes that to which it is devoted.

Now "the Gods" here represent not only the idols of idol-worshipers, but all the objects and desires people run after. For the idols are but the representatives of the desired object. But all these gods are transitory. If we admit the existence of Indra or any other god, even he is impermanent. Elsewhere it is said that all the gods are subject to the law of death and rebirth – at the time of the great dissolution they disappear. The vain things which men fix their minds on and run after are of the most illusory and transitory character. So whether it be the imaginary gods or the desires and objects the mind is fixed on, it – that is, those who thus act – has only a temporary reward because the object taken is in itself temporary. This is law and not sentiment.

Pushing into details a little further it is said that after death the person, compelled thereto by the thoughts of life, becomes fixed in this, that or the other object or state. That is why the intermediate condition of kama-loka is a necessity. In that state they become what they thought. They were bigots and tortured others: those thoughts give them torture. Internal fires consume them until they are purified. The varieties of their different conditions and appearances are as vast in

number as are all the immense varieties of thoughts. I could not describe them.

But those who worship or believe in the Self as all-in-all, not separate from any, supreme, the container, the whole, go to It, and, becoming It, know all because of its knowledge, and cease to be subject to change because It is changeless. This also is law, and not sentiment.

The chapter concludes by showing how the ignorant who believe in a Supreme Being with a form, fall into error and darkness at the time of their birth because of the hold which former life-recollections have upon the mind. This includes the power of the skandhas or aggregates of sensations and desires accumulated in prior lives. At birth these, being a natural part of us, rush to us and we to them, so that a new union is made for another lifetime. In the other life, not having viewed the Self as all and in all, and having worshiped many gods, the sensations of liking and disliking are so strong that the darkness of rebirth is irresistible. But the wise man died out of his former life with a full knowledge of the Self at the hour of death, and thus prevented the imprinting upon his nature of a set of sensations and desires that would otherwise, upon reincarnation, lead him into error.

This is the chapter on Unity, teaching that the Self is all, or if you like the word better, God: that God is all and not outside of nature, and that we must recognize this great unity of all things and beings in the Self. It and the next chapter are on the same subject and are only divided by a question put by Arjuna.

CHAPTER VIII
DEVOTION TO THE OMNIPRESENT SPIRIT NAMED AS OM

THE *Bhagavad-Gita* has a subsidiary title, "The Book of Devotion." Each of its chapters—with the exception of the first one— treats of devotion by some particular means; so the preceding chapters may be regarded as leading up to the highest form of devotion through the various forms adopted by mankind.

The Eighth Chapter is entitled Devotion to the Omnipresent Spirit named as Om This title is a key to what follows in the chapter, as well as a summation of what is contained therein.

The Western mind may find a difficulty in grasping the idea of devotion to that which is everywhere, for the common acceptation of the term implies an object to which one may devote himself; here, however, devotion is shown to be a quality inherent in the one who perceives and not in any object seen and is therefore, applicable universally as well as in particular.

The deepest thinkers, ancient and modern, hold that That which reasons is higher than reason; and similarly, That which perceives forms and acquires knowledge, is beyond all form, and is not limited to, or by, any degree of knowledge. These sages declare, and show, that all limitations are self-imposed and impermanent; hence they speak of the manifested universe as the "Great Illusion" produced by a general and temporary sense of separateness on the part of the beings involved. Their efforts at all times have been directed towards aiding the advancing intelligence of mankind to a truer realization of the essential nature of all beings, from which alone can come perfection in knowledge and hence the highest happiness.

"The Omnipresent Spirit named as Om," refers to the One Spirit which animates all worlds and beings. Another expression for the same idea is "The Self of all creatures", and in the present chapter Krishna begins his reply to Arjuna by saying "Braman the Supreme is the exhaustless". These terms, and many others used, are but different ways of conveying the same idea. An aid to comprehension may be

had if it is realized that "the power, or ability to perceive is common to all creatures", and that it includes all that the abstract terms Spirit, Life and Consciousness imply. In fact, the *Bhagavad-Gita* cannot be understood unless it is studied upon the basis that "That which lives and thinks in Man is the Eternal Pilgrim", and that "he is wise indeed who sees and knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind, and differ only in degree."

As has been before stated, Krishna stands for the Higher Self of all beings; there fore all the discourses under his name are to be taken as addressed to all men and not merely as from one personage to another. It will then be understood that when He speaks of "my being manifesting as the Individual Self", "*Purusha*, the Spiritual Person" or "myself in this body", He refers to the constituents of each human being.

"Karma is the emanation which causes the existence and reproduction of creatures". Perhaps this sentence may be made more clear if the student takes into consideration the ancient aphorism that "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects"; Karma means action, and as each being or creature acts according to his own degree of perception and feels the re-action or effect in the same relation, Karma as a whole, in so far as any world or system of worlds is concerned, is the interaction of all the beings of every grade who constitute, or are connected with, any such world or system. Karma therefore is inherent in all beings and is not self-existent as such, or imposed by any imagined originator of worlds.

Krishna shows that the realization of immortality must be had during life in the body if the highest state is to be attained. This state reached, the necessity for reincarnation ceases. Those however whose beliefs are strongly fixed on some particular form of after death existence, have a realization of what they aspire to and then in the fulness of time are reborn upon earth.

The meditation spoken of as necessary to the highest attainment is sometimes called "a lifetime's meditation" it means that the immortality of man has first to be assumed, and then rigidly adhered to as the basis for every thought and action, for it is only in this way that a realization of immortality can be obtained by embodied beings.

As it is from the Spirit in Man that all law and power proceeds, each human being creates his own limitations on every plane of being; he can transcend those limitations only by reverting to and maintaining his immortality, as the observer and experiencer of all the passing changes, himself unchanged and unchanging.

Throughout the dialogue Krishna speaks of the various paths of devotion taken by men. Most of these paths are taken in order to obtain some coveted reward, such as freedom from rebirth, enjoyment of the individual's ideal of happiness after release from the body; individual salvation. He shows that all these rewards may be obtained by constant effort, but that all are temporary in duration, necessitating a return to earthly existence at some later period, however remote. "The Brahmacharya laboring for salvation", labors for himself alone; he "goeth to the supreme goal", but in that state is beyond the power of helping his fellow men. Although he may remain in that blissful state for an immense period of time, the duties to his fellow men which set aside in order to obtain salvation for himself, will inevitably place him where those duties have to be faced and fulfilled. The case of such an one is quite different from "those great-souled ones who have attained to supreme perfection" in knowledge and universal duty.

"Al1 worlds up to that of Brahmâ are subject to rebirth again and again" In the section beginning with these words Krishna is pointing out the Law of Periodicity which prevails in every department of Nature. This more fully explained in *The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky, Vol. I, in that part referring to the Three Fundamental Principles. Briefly stated, our present earthly existence is the result of previous ones; the present earth is the result of previous earths; the present solar system is the result of previous ones. All of these present progress of some sort, for the essence of progress is change. All beings have evolved to their present status, be that high or low, and all are still evolving; an infinite universe presents infinite possibilities. "But," says Krishna, "there is that which upon the dissolution of all things else is not destroyed; it is indivisible, indestructible, and of another nature from the visible". This is the Divine Spark of Spirit, Life, and Consciousness in every form and being. In Man it is called the "Perceiver", That which sees, learns and knows, apart from all objects,

circumstances or conditions through which It passes. "This Supreme, O son of Pritha, within whom all creatures are included, and by whom all this is pervaded, may be attained by a devotion which is intent on him alone". To "act for and as the Self" in every state, under all conditions and in every circumstance is the highest path and leads to the highest goal; it is the path of duty in its highest aspect.

"I will now declare to thee, O best of the Bharatas, at what time *yogis* dying obtain freedom from or subjection to rebirth". *Yogis* are those who strive for union with the Higher Self. All do not succeed in any one life, so some are subject to rebirth. Krishna indicates the conditions of planets and seasons in the several cases of departure. It would appear from the specific statement above quoted that the indications mentioned do not apply to those whose thoughts are based upon material existence, and that in such cases other indications apply. It may be of interest to consider in this relation the declaration of the ancient sages that all Souls do not depart from the body in the same way. They hold that there are seven great plexi governing other minor ones, these represent channels through which influences are received or given. Each of these channels has its own direct relation to one of the seven divisions of the system, thus showing Man to have the possibility of conscious relation with all the divisions. From this it would follow that the predominating idea of any one life would necessitate departure through some particular channel leading to its own appropriate realm of freedom or bondage. Thus Man binds himself or frees himself by reason of his spiritual power—and his connection with every department and division of great Nature. Krishna concludes the chapter by saying, "The man of meditation who knoweth all this, reaches beyond what ever rewards are promised in the *Vedas*, or that result from sacrifices, or austerities, or from gifts of charity, and goeth to the supreme, the highest place". This highest place is sometimes called "All-knowingness," the perfection of knowledge, the possession of which confers power of action upon any or all departments of manifested Nature. To reach this "highest place" the highest motive must prevail in all thought and action, perhaps through many lives. The idea of this highest motive may be best conveyed by considering the following ancient pledge:

"NEVER WILL I SEEK NOR RECEIVE PRIVATE INDIVIDUAL SALVATION. NEVER WILL I ENTER INTO FINAL PEACE ALONE; BUT FOREVER AND EVERYWHERE WILL I LIVE AND STRIVE FOR THE REDEMPTION OF EVERY CREATURE THROUGHOUT THE WORLD."

CHAPTER IX
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE KINGLY KNOWLEDGE AND THE KINGLY MYSTERY

THE title of the Ninth Chapter is "Devotion by Means of the Kingly Knowledge and the Kingly Mystery". The word "Kingly" means of course "the Highest", so that if the title had been written in our time, it would have read "The Highest Knowledge and the Deepest Mystery."

That any book or system of thought should purport to afford the means by which such universal knowledge may be gained, is a fact which demands the attention of every intelligent mind. A claim so great may not be lightly brushed aside as unworthy of deep consideration. Thinkers everywhere admit that what is needed in the world is a self evidently true basis for thought and action; they realize that our sciences, philosophies and religions are attempts, more or less sincere, to obtain such a basis, but are being continually confronted with the fact that none of these supply a sure foundation for the peace, happiness and true progress of mankind. It is realized, for instance, that our modern modes of thought are based upon and applied to material existence and external appearances, all of these being the effects of unseen causes, and that where attempt is made to fathom the unseen, material existence is taken as the cause, and the unseen as the effect, with no perceptible gain in the direction of an understanding of Life or its purpose.

It is interesting to note that the modern basis of thought and action is the reverse of that of the ancient sages, and that whereas our ways of thinking leave us in the dark, the ways of the ancients throw a clear light upon all our problems. Let us therefore study the wisdom of the past, that we may go forward with a clearer and more definite purpose than we now have.

In this chapter, Krishna addresses his disciple Arjuna in these terms: "Unto thee who findeth no fault, I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge, coupled with a realization of it, which having known thou shalt be delivered from evil." The words "Unto thee who findeth no fault" mean that Arjuna is recognized as one who

understands that Law rules in everything and every circumstance, and that nothing can come to him of good or of evil, but that of which he himself was the cause; thus he accepted the good without exultation and the evil without complaint. In other words, Arjuna was equal-minded in pain or pleasure, joy or sorrow, and stood ready to suffer or enjoy whatever the Higher Self had in store for him by way of experience or discipline. Thus at the outset Krishna propounds and Arjuna accepts the rule of Law, as a necessary step towards further enlightenment.

The term "knowledge" as used here has a greater meaning than we are accustomed to give it, for we would esteem as "knowledge" an all-round acquaintance with religions, philosophies, arts, sciences and histories as so far recorded, together with that which our senses give us in regard to the external material world. It is generally held, for instance, that one cannot know the constituents or properties of a piece of stone, without mechanical or chemical aids applied directly to the object, and that nothing can be known of the thoughts or feelings of another unless expressed in words or acts; whereas, the knowledge spoken of by Krishna implies a full identification of the mind — or thinking power — with whatever subject or object it may be directed to, which concentration enables the perceiver to cognize all the inherent qualities of the subject or object, as well as all incidental peculiarities, and know all about its nature.

The possibility of such "all-knowingness" is not admitted by the leaders of thought, and men of our day, whose process is based upon reasoning from particulars to universals, from effects to probable cause, and who are content to erect ever-changing hypotheses. Their process of reasoning is one, which although more refined and expanded, is the same as that used by our savage races. The sages of old, through experience gained from many civilizations, had learned to begin with universals — the plane of causation — and had finally come to see, understand and use the true process, after numberless testings and verifications. It is the result of this acquired wisdom that Krishna imparts to Arjuna as rapidly as his advancing intelligence will permit. It is this wisdom and its results that are portrayed in *The Secret Doctrine* — or Theosophy. So, if the student is to understand the

Bhagavad-Gita, he must begin with universals and with the universal ever in mind expand into all particulars.

Take the opening sentence of the second paragraph of this chapter.

> "All this universe is pervaded by me in my invisible form; all things exist in me, but I do not exist in them";

here Krishna speaks as the Omnipresent Spirit which is in all beings, but which is fully realized in such beings as Krishna, Christ, and others who have appeared in the world of men.

When Krishna uses the personal pronoun throughout the *Gita*, he is not referring to his own personality, but to the Self of All. So the above sentence may be read "All this universe is pervaded and sustained by the One Self — the Omnipresent Spirit; as it is the Self and Perceiver in all forms, it cannot be seen externally. Because of It, all forms exist, but It is not dependent upon form or forms; these are dependent upon It." In this sentence is contained an expression of the basic Universal Principle, the cause and sustainer of all that was, is, or ever shall be, and without which nothing exists. Being Universal or Omnipresent, and Infinite, no form of thought can define It, yet mankind has ever attempted to define the Infinite by their finite conceptions of Deity. Hence the many gods of different times and peoples; man-made idols every one of them, whether they be mental or physical. It is these man-made conceptions of Deity that have ever tended to erect and sustain divisions between peoples; tribal .and national gods deny and frustrate a realization of Universal Brotherhood.

The ancient teaching which Krishna once more enunciates is that all forms of every kind proceed from One Universal Source; the life of each is hidden in and sustained by that Source — the One Life. The power to perceive and expand its range of perception and expression is the same in all beings and forms; the degrees of perception and expression are shown in the innumerable classes of beings. It is this power that is behind all evolution — the unfolding from within outwards.

Krishna goes on to present the Law under which all beings evolve, in the words, "O son of Kunti, at the end of a kalpa all things return unto my nature, and then again at the beginning of another kalpa, I cause them to evolve again". A kalpa means a great age or period, and

the law referred to is what is spoken of in *The Secret Doctrine* as the Law of Periodicity, or the law of cycles. Everywhere in nature we find this law in operation, as in day and night, summer and winter, life and,death, in-breathing and out-breathing, the systole and diastole of the heart, sowing and reaping. The general name for this universal Law is Karma, which means Action and Reaction, Cause and Effect; it applies to all beings and all planes. An ancient aphorism says, "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effect." Hence all manifestation is the result of karmic action by beings of every grade in their inter-action and inter-relation.

The phrase "I cause them to evolve again" carries with it the meaning that each period of manifestation, great or small, is followed by another on the basis of the experience gained. That which causes "them to evolve again" is the Self of All, which is also the self of each, or as it has been poetically called, "the Great Breath," with its great periodical recurrent "out-breathings and in-breathings"; ceaseless pulsation may be said to be Its one attribute. It is this essential nature which is meant in the phrase "I emanate again and again this whole assemblage of beings, without their will, by the power of the material essence". "Without their will", may be understood by considering that no human being is in a body because he — as such — desired to be; nor does he leave his body because he desires to; the impelling force proceeds from the inner self. the real man. "By the power of the material essence" may be understood by considering the statement that Spirit and Matter are co-existent and co-eternal. By "matter" is meant primordial substance from which all differentiations in matter are produced by conscious actions of beings of different grades.

> "I am as one who sitteth indifferent" means that the One Self is not involved in any or all forms of manifestation, but ever remains the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, .and also the highest soul. Just as each one may say, "I was in a child body and had experiences pertaining to that state; I passed through the changes of body and circumstance up to the present, and will pass through all changes to come, but I remain the same unchanging identity throughout all conditions."

"The deluded despise me in human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things". The One Self is the self of all beings. The *Upanishads* say that "the Self shines in all; but in all It does not shine forth." Krishna says that the deluded fail to recognize this Self, and judging from appearances and arbitrary classifications, maintain separateness. So acting, they set in motion causes that produce similar effects — in other words, bad karma.

The remainder of the chapter is devoted to presentations of the right understanding of Self and its results, as well as the results of a false or imperfect understanding.

Krishna's teaching throughout, emphasises the statement that there is but One Spirit and not several — the same Spirit animating all beings and sustaining all. The same power to perceive is possessed by all alike. The differences in beings consist in the range of perception which has been acquired through evolution, and this applies to all lives below Man, to Man himself, and to all beings higher than Man. In "*The Voice of the Silence*" it is said that "Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects," and in other writings Mind is spoken of as "the mirror of the Soul". We cannot fail to see that we act in accordance with the ideas of life that we hold; that what we call "our mind" is a number of ideas held by us as a basis for thought and action; that we change ideas from time to time, as we find occasion for such change; but that at all times we act from the basis of ideas presently held. The reason for the differences between human beings is the false, imperfect or true ideas, which form the basis of thought or action. We are prone to accept and hold only such ideas as are in accord with our personal desires. Krishna presents an example of what, among us, would be called a good desire, that of "those enlightened in the *Vedas*", whose desire is for a personal enjoyment of heaven; these, he says, obtain and enjoy that heaven for a period of time proportionate to their merits, and then they sink back to mortal birth. He concludes by saying "thus, those who long for the accomplishment of desires, following the *Vedas*, obtain a happiness which comes and goes. But for those who, thinking of me as identical with all, constantly worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness". The words "constantly worship me," have an explanation further on, in the chapter where he says, "Whatever thou doest, O Son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever

thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me". The real "worship" is devotion to an ideal. Here "the Self of All" is the ideal, and the action indicated is to think and act for, and as, the One Self in all things, without self-interest in the results. We are not attached to results by our acts, but by our thoughts; freedom comes from a renunciation of self-interest in the fruit of actions.

All of the above is included in Krishna's closing injunction; "Having obtained this finite, joyless world, worship me. Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me."

CHAPTER X
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE UNIVERSAL DIVINE PERFECTIONS

THE title given is "Devotion By Means of the Universal Divine Perfections". The words "Universal Divine Perfections" have a significance not usually perceived. Men speak of perfection from the standpoint of imperfection, and always in relation to forms, conditions and appearances that are constantly changing; so that with humanity in general the standard of perfection is an ever-receding and elusive, as well as delusive idea. Here again, as with our modern science, we reason from particulars to universals, instead of from universals to particulars, never perceiving that nothing less that the cause itself could ever know itself.

The discourses of Krishna but repeat that which was known before, to the perfected men of all ages, and that which all divine incarnations have since declared — that Man is identical with the Absolute unmanifested, and also with the Deity as we see It manifested in Nature. Our doctrines and education lead us to think that we are inherently imperfect; if we are so, we can never by any possibility become perfect; but if we are inherently perfect, we can see, understand and correct imperfect knowledge and use of all forces, for it is forces we are dealing with, not forms; it is ideas, not persons. We will begin to understand that there is but one force or power — the Spiritual, and that all the various effects of that one power or force that we see and experience, are due to the direction given by conscious entities of many kinds in their different degrees. To understand the "divine perfections", they must be applied universally, from the standpoint of the One Self — the Self of each, the Self of All.

While the *Gita* is laid out in the form of a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, as between a divine teacher and his disciple and may be so understood, it can also be applied in another way; Krishna is the Higher Self in each, and Arjuna, the mind, the mirror of external impressions; so that the dialogue can be profitably taken as a means to the realization of the Self, and Its adjustment and control of the lower

elements and forces. The key-note of the ancient teaching is that the creative and sustaining power of all things and beings is not to be sought for externally; it can only be found at the very root of the nature of each and every being. As it is put in the *Upanishads*, "The Self-Being pierced the openings outward, hence one looks outward, not within himself." The wise, who seek the Eternal, look inward, for "that which lives and thinks in Man is the Eternal Pilgrim" (*Secret Doctrine*). It is necessary then for the student to dwell upon the idea that he acts for and as the Self of All; that the power to see all, and to know all, is potentially present with him, is in fact his real Self. He will at least then understand when Krishna says "Neither the assemblage of the Gods nor the Adept Kings know my origin, because I am the origin of all the Gods and of the Adepts"; "I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me," that he is speaking of the Self of All and of each, and that the origin of that which is Eternal and unchanging is not to be discovered, for it is both Being and Non-Being. As Patanjali states it, "The Soul is the Perceiver; is vision itself, pure and simple, and it looks directly on ideas". This means that each human being has the power to see and know all things, however restricted that power may be at any given time; that the restriction lies in the more or less narrow range of the ideas that he adheres to, and which form the basis for his actions. This self-limited range of perception, not only prevents the full exercise of his powers as Self, but acts as a bar to the right understanding of his observation and experience; so, even the man of today may say, "I am the origin of all things; all things proceed from me", for so far as he is concerned, his adopted ideas and acquired nature form the basis for all causes set in motion by him, and also constitute his field of observation and experience of effects. By the very power that resides in Self, Man creates good and evil, the delusion of separateness, and all imperfections. Divine perfections are universal; they can only be reached by acting for and as the Self in all things. This state can be obtained by a gradual elimination of all bases of action that make for separateness.

Arjuna begins by stating to himself (Krishna) the characteristics that to him designate the very highest place and power. "Thou art Parabrahm" (beyond Brahmâ) "thou art the Eternal Presence, the Divine Being; all-pervading; without beginning." "Thou alone knowest

thyself by thy Self." "Thou alone can fully declare thy divine powers". "How shall I, constantly thinking of thee, be able to know thee?" "In what particular forms shall I meditate on thee ?"

The reply begins with: "I will make thee acquainted with the chief of my divine manifestations, for the extent of my nature is infinite. I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings; I am the beginning, the middle and the end of all existing things." He then goes on to recite that among the gods, the Self is the highest; among planetary bodies, the Sun expresses It; among the spirits of the air, the chief of these is an expression of It; among the sacred writings, It is the essence of these — the all-compelling song or sound; and so on through a long list of forms, powers and qualities understood by Arjuna. He concludes by saying, "I am, O Arjuna, the seed of all existing things, and there is not anything, whether animate or inanimate, which is without me". "My divine manifestations are without end, the many which I have mentioned are by way of example. Whatever creature is permanent, of good fortune or mighty, also know it to be sprung from a portion of my energy. But what, O Arjuna, hast thou to do with so much knowledge as this? I established this whole universe with a portion of myself and remain separate."

Arjuna had asked Krishna under what particular form should the Self be worshipped. Krishna's reply was "under all forms", that there is nothing in the universe, animate or inanimate, which is without the Self. The seeker for Truth and knowledge must see the One Self in all things, and all things in the Self, and then act for and as the Self of All. All sacred writings are addressed to the individual, for it is from within the individual, and the individual alone, that reformation can begin and must be consummated. The study and application of the *Gita* tends to break down all ideas based upon separateness, and impresses upon the student that the way of true knowledge of the divine perfections lies in universal service, without distinction of caste, creed, sex, color or race. "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child."

CHAPTER XI
VISION OF THE DIVINE FORM AS INCLUDING ALL FORMS

ENTITLED "Vision of the Divine Form as including All Forms," this chapter, like all the others, is to be applied to the individual, for while many classes of being, with their degrees of consciousness and power, are continually referred to, a clear indication is given that each Divine Ego is primarily the Self, and contains within his being every element that exists in the Universe.

Arjuna begins in this chapter by saying, "My delusion has been dispersed by the words which thou for my soul's peace hast spoken concerning the mystery of the Adhyatma — the Spirit." He had perceived that the One Self animates all forms of every kind; that the sustaining power, as well as the perceiving power is within each and every form; but he desired to see and understand the form or container of Self; in other words, the means by which the One Self became focussed — so to speak — in the innumerable forms of existence.

Krishna in reply gives the key to the answer in one sentence. "Here in my body now behold, O Gudakesha, the whole universe animate and inanimate gathered here in one, and all things else thou hast a wish to see. But as with thy natural eyes thou art not able to see me, I will give thee the divine eye." Here, it is evident that the body Krishna spoke of was a spiritual one, since it required the divine eye to see it, and that Arjuna could not perceive this highest form unless he himself possessed similar sight. Body implies form and substance, and in this relation must mean the highest conceivable primordial matter or substance, which to us might be comprehended as "luminosity and energy," the source of all light and power.

The words "the Divine form as including all forms" imply that there are no forms but those which the Divine form includes, from which it may be understood that the substratum of every form is the same primordial substance spoken of in this chapter as "the divine form," and that every being possesses a divine form which contains within it

potentially every power and element. In this ancient teaching is to be found the true basis of evolution, an unfolding from within outwards.

The descriptive portions of this chapter may be better understood if the student will bear in mind that the *Gita*, as we have it in our language, is a rendition from the Sanscrit — the latter being a scientific language whose every letter has a numerical value, with a corresponding sound and meaning, whereas our language is that of a fighting and a trading people, with a paucity of terms for anything beyond the physical. One will not then make the mistake of thinking that such descriptions are due to a childish and ignorant imagery, but in reality to a knowledge of powers, forces, beings and states of consciousness.

Sanjaya (the recorder of the dialogue) says, "Han (Krishna) the mighty Lord of mysterious power, showed to the son of Pritha (Arjuna) his supreme form, with many mouths and eyes and many wonderful appearances, with many divine ornaments, many celestial weapons upraised; adorned with celestial garlands and robes, anointed with celestial ointments and perfumes, full of every marvelous thing, the eternal God whose face is turned in all directions."

"The eternal God" is the Perceiver within the divine form; the "face . . . turned in all directions" is the "divine form," which like a spherical mirror reflects all things. All differentiations of substance occur within the divine form, and each differentiation necessitates its own peculiar modes of expression and appearances, corresponding to "mouths," "eyes," and "wonderful forms."

It has been said of old that "the Deity geometrizes." All forms evolve from within outwards. From the "point" whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere, a radiation equal in all directions begins, and establishes a circumference; a sphere within which the activity of the "point" is particularly confined. The "point" spreading out horizontally becomes a diameter dividing the sphere into positive and negative hemispheres, forming a basis for action and reaction. A further extension of the point vertically to the circumference divides the sphere into four parts, represented on a plane surface as a cross within the circle. Remembering that these extensions of the "point," or center, are lines of force proceeding from

the center and tending to return to it, we can conceive of the beginning of a revolution of the sphere whereby the ends of the vertical and horizontal lines extend towards each other, forming at first the ansated cross, and finally the square within the circle, in reality, a cube or six-sided figure within the sphere. The cube, if looked at from either side presents the appearance of four angles, which, if we can conceive of them as being luminous points equidistant from the bright center, would be seen as a four-pointed star, the symbol and sign of the animal kingdom. If we can imagine Arjuna as seeing within the "divine form" all living lines of force and the forms produced by them, the four, the five, the six-pointed star, and the many-sided figures, all in motion and of wonderful brilliancy of light and of many colors, presenting the activities of all beings of every grade in the universe, we may obtain some conception of the descriptive parts of this chapter.

"I am Time matured, come hither for the destruction of all these creatures." "Time matured" means the completion of cycles; everything that begins in time, ends in time; every action has its own cycle or period of return, or re-action; it is action and actions that produce cycles, and these latter range from those of momentary duration to those of a "great age," as they are produced by separate entities, classes of beings, or the collectivity of actions by all beings of every grade concerned in any particular stream of evolution. The general reference here is to the impermanence of all forms or combinations of them. Change is necessitated by progress, for without change there would be stagnation; hence the constant disintegration and re-integration of elements in ever-changing relation and form, all brought about by the requirements of the Perceiver — the Real Man within, who is the sole survivor through all changes.

"Thou art the one indivisible Being, and non-being, that which is supreme." This statement can only be understood by each one applying it to himself. We know that we are not our bodies, for they constantly change, while we remain the same identity through all the changes. We are not our "minds," for we change them whenever we find occasion to do so; if we were our minds we could not change them, and further, it is apparent that "change" cannot see "change"; only that which is permanent can see change. That permanency is the Real, the immortal Man, or, as the "*Voice of the Silence*" states it, "the

Man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike." Each is the Self, the Perceiver; non-being, yet the cause and sustainer of being; as the *Gita* states it in this chapter, "thou art the Knower and that which is to be known"; "thou art the final supreme receptacle of this universe" — the garnerer of all experience when this universe is dissolved. At the end of the Great Cycle, which includes all minor cycles, all beings return to the primordial state, plus the experience gained. The next great stream of evolution will proceed on the basis of the acquired knowledge of all beings concerned.

> "Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee 'O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend,' and blinded by my affection and presumption. I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this I beseech thee, O inconceivable being, to forgive."

Krishna is to be considered as not only representing the Self in all beings, but as a Divine Being embodied in a human form. Arjuna had asked to see the "divine form," and having seen it, was awed by its grandeur and glory, and realized that he had conducted himself towards Krishna as a human being like himself, although of vastly greater learning: he therefore besought forgiveness for his presumption and asked Krishna to resume the form to which he was accustomed.

Here in this ancient scripture is pictured the fatal error made again and again by mankind in the failure to recognize a divine teacher when he appears among them in human guise. Buddha, Jesus, and many others before and after them, were treated by their contemporaries as ordinary human beings actuated by similar motives as the rest of mankind. They were opposed by the established interests, religious and otherwise, because the doctrines they taught were destructive of the hard and fast conclusions upon which those interests were founded; their speech and acts, although intended to instruct, enlighten, and benefit, were construed as violations of law and custom, and were frequently characterized as criminal in nature. Even among their immediate disciples, suspicion, doubt, jealousy, fear, resentment and self-interest were to be found, none of which could have had existence had the real nature of the teacher been understood. These

conditions prevented the true relation between teacher and disciple which is so necessary to the latter if he would benefit fully from that relation. It is true that all the disciples learned something in spite of their defects, but it is also true that the lack of intuitive perception of the divine nature of their teachers was the most important factor in the failure of those disciples to truly transmit the teachings they had received; for that lack closed the door in themselves through which the divine enlightenment could come. Even Arjuna, loyal and devoted disciple as he was, had failed to perceive the wondrous nature of his teacher. It was not until that teacher by his favor and power had caused "the divine eye" in Arjuna to open that the ability to see on that plane of substance was gained. It is natural to suppose that Arjuna had by his unshaken confidence and constant devotion arrived at a stage of development where such help was merited.

It might be well for students of Theosophy to consider whether they may not have made a similar mistake in regard to Those who brought the message of Theosophy to the Western world, and so kept closed the only door through which direct help could come.

In the closing portion of the chapter Krishna says: "I am not to be seen, even as I have shown myself to thee, by study of the *Vedas* (scriptures), nor by mortifications, nor alms giving, nor sacrifices. I am to be approached and seen and known in truth by means of that devotion which has me alone as the object."

The following, written by one of the Teachers, may serve as an explanation of the foregoing paragraph. "Ishwara, the spirit in man, is untouched by any troubles, works, fruit of works, or desires, and when a firm position is assumed, with the end in view of reaching union with spirit through concentration, He (that spirit) comes to the aid of the lower self and raises it gradually to higher planes." The "firm position" and concentration are one and the same; it means a lifetime's devotion, an acting for and as the Self in all things.

> "He whose actions are for me alone, who esteemeth me the supreme goal, who is my servant only, without attachment to the results of action and free from enmity towards any creature, cometh to me, O son of Pandu."

CHAPTER XII
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF FAITH

THE word "faith" as used in this chapter has a far deeper meaning than is usually given it. To have faith is the holding of a conviction of the truth of that upon which one's faith is fixed. There are many "faiths" in the world, some adopted because of ignorance, credulity and superstition: others because they appeal to the desires of their adherents; others, again, because of the partial truths they hold. That which is lacking in all these is "knowledge," for a conviction held in ignorance only perpetuates ignorance and its results: a conviction held from desire only perpetuates desires and their results; a conviction held because of partial truths perceived indicates a little knowledge, but not enough to distinguish the error that is always mixed with partial truths. The "faith" spoken of by Krishna is that which is founded on self knowledge — or knowledge of the Self as being All and in All. A reliance upon that Supreme Self, and an identification of one's Self with It, presents an unchanging and unchangeable basis from which the Truth in regard to Man and all Nature may be perceived. "True faith" can only exist when founded upon right knowledge.

In the reply of Krishna which closes the eleventh chapter, these words are found: "I am to be approached and seen and known in truth by means of that devotion which has me alone as an object." Arjuna follows in the twelfth chapter with the question: "Among those of thy devotees who always thus worship thee, which take the better way, those who worship the indivisible and unmanifested, or those who serve thee as thou now art ?"

Krishna's reply embodies the following:

"For those whose hearts are fixed on the unmanifested the labor is greater, because the path which is not manifest is with difficulty attained by corporeal beings." A foot-note explains that "The difficulty here stated is that caused by the personality, which causes us to see the Supreme as different and separate from ourselves." The tendency of human beings is to think and act as persons in their relations with other human beings and with manifested nature in general, and

although they may ardently desire to act "for and as the Self," they find themselves constantly falling under the sway of the purely personal feeling of separateness.

The words "Or those who serve thee as thou now art" refer to the form in which Krishna was best known to Arjuna. That this was a human form is indicated in the previous chapter, where Arjuna says, "Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee 'O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend,' and blinded by my affection and presumption, I have at times treated thee without respect, in sport, in recreation, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this, I beseech thee, O inconceivable being, to forgive." In this sentence Arjuna recognizes Krishna as a divine incarnation, a being who had reached perfection and who had voluntarily incarnated in order to help those still struggling in "this ocean of incarnations and death." That such divine incarnations have not been infrequent, both before and since the time of Krishna, is shown by a study of the world's great religions; the rationale and meaning of such incarnations is clearly shown in the "*Secret Doctrine*."

The course of every Arjuna — and each one of us is just that — is first a recognition that true knowledge must exist, and an ardent desire to obtain that knowledge. Then comes a search for the source of that knowledge; in that search lies the danger for the seeker. He finds many teachers, each with a separate claim to knowledge. While as yet he has no means of determining the true from the false, he will accept ignorantly that teacher or teaching which accords with his ideas and desires. This unf6rtunately is the course of most seekers. But there are to be found others who examine carefully the fundamental bases of the teachings offered, and who will accept only that one whose foundational propositions can be so universally applied that their truth becomes self-evident.

A resumé of the previous chapters will show that Krishna pointed out to Arjuna the various forms of belief and practice — or devotion — followed by men, and that these, though partial and erroneous, would finally lead to the one Truth if the seeker was sincere and devoted in his search for it. At the same time the One Reality or Truth was shown to be accessible to all men, and to be the highest, most direct and noblest path, leading to understanding wisdom and true happiness.

"But if thou shouldst be unable at once steadfastly fix thy heart and mind on me, strive then O Dhananjaya, to find find me by constant practice in devotion." Steadfastness is gained by a constant endeavor to become steadfast.

"If after constant practice, thou art still unable, follow me by actions performed for me; for by doing works for me thou shalt attain perfection." The works referred to are special ones, designed and performed for the sake of the Supreme, all tending towards an elimination of the "personal idea" of separateness.

"But if thou art unequal even to this, then, being self-restrained, place all thy works, failures and successes alike, on me, abandoning in me the fruit of every action. For knowledge is better than constant practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation; final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation." It has been said that the Source of all beings is One; that the goal is One; but that the Path varies with each pilgrim. Hence each pilgrim is at a point of evolution or development where one or other of the steps presented is within reach. Each of these steps is shown to be leading in the direction of the goal, but the aspirant must see them as only steps, the condition of his success being that he must ever keep the goal — union with the Higher Self — in view.

"Being self-restrained," means holding the personal self in abeyance. "Place all thy works, failures and successes alike, on me, abandoning in me the fruit of every action," hardly needs an explanation; for the same instruction has been given so often in previous chapters of the *Gita*, such as "Freedom comes from a renunciation of self-interest in the fruit of one's actions." Self-interest is always a matter of thinking; we can have no attachment for anything that we do not think about, nor can we have any dislike for a thing we do not think about; so if we find confronting us things right to be done, we should do them, regardless of whether they promise success or failure to ourselves. Krishna says that final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation, thus placing complete renunciation as attainment of the goal. Renunciation is superior to meditation because it is by meditation upon the end in view that renunciation comes; meditation is superior to knowledge because right knowledge produces right meditation;

knowledge is better than constant practice, because practice begets knowledge.

The remainder of the chapter should be read in connection with these notes, for there Krishna speaks of the qualities possessed by those who follow the path he shows. The chapter ends with these words, "But those who seek this sacred ambrosia — the religion of immortality — even as I have explained it, full of faith, intent on me above all others and united to devotion, are my most beloved."

CHAPTER XIII
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF THE DISCRIMINATION OF THE KSHETRA FROM KSHETRAJNA

IN The Path magazine of October, 1890, Wm. Q. Judge published this Thirteenth Chapter entire, prefacing the publication with the following words:

> "There are nowadays many professors of occultism, just as years ago there was a numerous brood of those who pretended to know about the philosopher's stone. Both, however, were and are learned chiefly in repeating what they have heard of as occultism, with no substance or reality underneath all the profession. Now, as then, the mere incidentals of the true occultist's practice are thought of, spoken about, and pursued. Phenomena or the power to produce them constitute the end and aim of these searchers' efforts. But seek as we may, we will not find among them real knowledge, real experience, true initiation. Being on the wrong path, deluded by false light, they cannot do aught but mystify, annoy, and deceive those who put their trust in them. During the days of Rosicrucian fame there was some excuse for the mass of seekers, but since the old Hindu works have become gradually known to everyone, that exculpation is at an end; for on every hand the note of warning is sounded, and everywhere are signs that show in what direction lies the true path. Particularly is this so in that wonderful book, the *Bhagavad-Gita*. In it however void of phenomena, however unattractive in respect to bait for psychic emotion, it points out the way, declares the mystic science, true devotion, right action."

It has been said of this chapter that it contains the whole of occultism, by which is meant, that all-inclusive occultism which begins with the highest point of perception and realization—the Self within, and which regards action and reaction on every plane of manifestation,

as the process by which individual and universal power and wisdom are attained.

That which stands in the way of knowledge is ignorance, and from the point of view of true occultism, the root of all ignorance lies in misconceptions as to one's own essential nature.

In this chapter Krishna treats of devotion by means of the discrimination of the body from the soul, meaning thought and action based upon a knowledge of what is body and what is soul. He then speaks of "this perishable body" as including not only the physical form, but such elements as the following:

Ahankara-egotism, *Buddhi*-intellect or judgement, the unmanifest, invisible spirit; the ten centers of action, the mind and the five objects of sense; desire, aversion, pleasure and pain, persistency of life, and firmness, the power of cohesion. In this statement are included all that the ordinary mind conceives of as conscious existence, and purposely so, for if we are to arrive at an understanding of what is permanent, we must first see clearly what is impermanent and perishable.

In the divisions given by Krishna, *Ahankara* is placed first because in it is to be found the main cause of differences. *Ahankara* is the tendency to identify ourselves with forms and conditions; from that self-identifying attachment all the variations proceed; intellect or judgment is based upon that self-identification, as are all the likes and dislikes, modes, and channels of action.

If we can grasp the idea of the perishable nature of *Ahankara*-egotism, the perishable nature of the other elements can be understood. It is a fact that we do identify ourselves with the ever-changing perishable body, and with its conditions and relations, which are also ever-changing. We say, "I am happy, or I am sad," "I am sick or I am well," "I am contented or I am dissatisfied," all of these expressions being due to some form or condition which is changeable. We should observe that the self-identifying attachment is chiefly concerned with the present form and conditions, although we are aware that other forms and conditions have existed in the past, to which we were attached by like or dislike, and that still others will exist in the future.

Through all the changes of the past we have gone; through all the changes of the future we must go. The past changes have perished; the present changes are perishing; the future changes will also perish; but "we" remain through them all, unchanged and unchanging. If we can grasp this idea and hold to it, we will have taken the first step towards right knowledge and freedom, for, as an ancient sage has put it, "The soul is the Perceiver; is assuredly vision itself pure and simple; unmodified; and looks directly upon ideas." In this chapter are the following statements of a similar kind: "I am the knower in every mortal body;" "As a single sun illuminateth the whole world, even so doth the One Spirit illumine every body;" "He who seeth the Supreme Being existing alike imperishable in all perishable things, sees indeed;" "Perceiving the same lord present in everything and everywhere, he does not by the lower self (*Ahankara*) destroy his own soul, but goeth to the supreme end."

It must be apparent to every one who thinks, that to be immortal necessitates being change less, for that which changes has no stability. There could not be a continuity of consciousness even through one physical existence, unless there is permanence of identity; the same "I" has noted the conditions, ideas, and feelings from childhood up to the present time, and will note them through all the years to come.

This Western mind of ours finds a difficulty in reconciling "changelessness" with "progression ;" this is because of *Ahankara*, the tendency to identify ourselves with forms and conditions. Forms and conditions do change, but not of themselves; there is That which causes change to succeed change, and That is the indwelling spirit, which continually impels the instruments It has evolved towards further perfection. So progress and evolution mean an unfolding from within outward, a constant impulsion towards a better and better instrument for the use of the Spirit — the Self within.

"The spirit in the body is called *Maheswara*, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also *Paramatma*, the highest soul." This sentence really tells the whole story; the Spirit sees, rectifies, sustains and enjoys through Its instrument or vehicle; the ideal of progress is a perfected vehicle which will contact and reflect in the highest sense all worlds and all beings.

The term "body" has been used throughout this chapter, but it must not be supposed that only the physical body is meant. The physical body is included in the term, because itself is the product of involution and evolution from higher states of substance or matter. Krishna says "Know that *Prakriti* or nature, (substance), and *Purusha* the spirit, are without beginning. And know that the passions and the three qualities are sprung from Nature. Nature or *prakriti* is said to be that which operates in producing cause and effect in actions." There can be no action unless there is something to be acted upon; that something is the highest substance; it is that which fills all space, and from which all denser forms of substance or matter have been evolved, and within which they are contained. Thus, the body represents on this plane all the other states of substance from which it has been evolved; it is surrounded by, and connected with them. A study of the Seven Principles of Man will give an understanding of this statement, if it is remembered that Man, the Thinker, is not any of his principles; they are his vehicles or instruments.

> "Individual spirit or *Purusha* is said to be the cause of experiencing pain and pleasure" (through the connection with nature found in the instrument) ; "for spirit, when invested with matter or *prakriti* experienceth the qualities that proceed from *Prakriti*; its connection with these qualities" (and self-identification with them) "is the cause of its rebirth in good and evil wombs."

Krishna says that "the passions and the three qualities are sprung from nature" (*prakriti*). The three qualities represent attachment to bodily existence through love of that which is good and pleasant (*sattva*) through a propensity for passion and desire (*rajas*) and through heedlessness, which destroys the power of judgment. They are all due to self-identification with one form or another of bodily existence.

That which informs and moves all manifestation is the One Spirit. That Spirit is the Real and Permanent in all forms and beings; as Krishna says "it is wisdom itself, the object of wisdom, and that which is to be gained by wisdom ; " it is "the receptacle and the seed," it is the power to perceive, the consciousness, the life in all things. It is the cause of all manifestation and the holder of all knowledge gained thereby. Causing and perceiving change, It changes not. All power and

all law proceed from It, are inherent in It. This is the meaning of "Spirit," where Krishna says in conclusion: "Those who with the eye of wisdom thus perceive what is the difference between the body and Spirit, and the destruction of the illusion of objects, go to the Supreme." By the "illusion of objects" is meant, the seeing of the objects as different from Spirit. Each object may be called an expression of Spirit through various evolved vehicles, whether these be called atoms, molecules, or forms composed of them.

In the *Voice of the Silence* a statement of the same import may be remembered: "The eye of Spirit—the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her (Nature's) kingdoms."

All creatures, being essentially Spirit, strive (consciously or unconsciously) to realize their spiritual being through contact psychical and physical with all manifested nature; some by meditation; some by service; some — mistakenly — by selfishness through separateness. While all paths lead to the Supreme, it is only when the Permanent as distinguished from the Perishable is realized, that erroneous paths are forsaken and the true Path followed.

CHAPTER XIV
DEVOTION BY MEANS OF SEPARATION FROM THE THREE QUALITIES

THIS chapter, like all the chapters in the *Gita*, speaks of but one Supreme devotion, to which all other forms of human devotion must eventually give way, as the pilgrim strives for perfection.

"The great Brahmâ" here refers to *prakriti*, matter or nature, for matter or nature is the cause of all action throughout the universe, as it is the basis by which action may take place. There can be no action unless there is something to be acted upon; hence, spirit and substance are held to be without beginning, that is, co-eternal and co-existent.

As there are great periods of non-manifestation as well as of manifestation, so for Spirit or Consciousness, and Substance or matter; there must be periods of latency and periods of activity which are synchronous with each other.

Prakriti or substance is "the womb" in which the Self or Spirit places "the seed" of thought or idea; from this, action and evolution begin. The following classification and discussion of the three qualities illustrates the vital difference between the ancient, true psychology of the East, and what is termed Western psychology. Both abound in classifications; those of the East are much more numerous than those of the West and cover a far wider field; Western psychology in its classifications refers solely to mental states. The psychology of the *Gita* and the ancient sages classifies the moral states, treating the mental states as mere effects produced by moral conditions. Herein lies the secret of the hold the *Gita* has had all down the ages, and continues to have increasingly. It lays bare unsuspected bases of error; it discloses the most subtle forms of self-delusion ; it marks out the true course so painstakingly that the dullest mind cannot fail to grasp a clear perception of the path to true knowledge.

The three great qualities called *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* — light, or truth; passion or desire; and indifference or darkness — are born from nature, and bind the imperishable soul to the body. The binding is by the attachment of the self or soul to the qualities perceived in nature.

The *sattva* quality binds to rebirth through attachment to knowledge and that which is pleasant; the fruit of righteous acts appertains to *sattva*.

Rajas is of the nature of desire, producing thirst and propensity; it binds the soul through action and its consequences. Being separative and compelling in quality, its fruit is gathered in pain.

Tamas is of the nature of indifference or darkness; as the chapter states, it is the deluder of all creatures; it imprisoneth the Ego in a body through heedless folly, sleep and idleness; ignorance, delusion and folly exist where *tamas* prevails.

Every human being is attached to physical existence through the qualities; it must not be supposed, however, that one of these qualities is present in one individual and absent in others, for all three qualities belong to nature and living being. The differences in human beings are found in the degrees of attraction which each one has for one or other of the qualities. As the chapter recites, "when *tamas* and *rajas* are overcome, then *sattva* prevaileth;" "when *sattva* and *tamas* are hidden, then *rajas* prevaileth;" "when *sattva* and *rajas* diminish, then *tamas* is chiefly acting."

Once the student understands the nature of these three qualities or attractions found in physical existence, he is prepared to examine his own disposition in regard to them. Has he clearness of perception? Is he of a quiet and peaceful nature? Is he attached to knowledge and that which is pleasant? If so, the quality of *Sattva* is there to some degree, even if only for the time being. To the individual, *Sattva* is that which seems good to him, even though his prevailing quality be *Rajas* or *Tamas*; so the bee seeks and appreciates the sweetness in the flower, but is ignorant of the flower's nature or purpose. While every form in the three kingdoms of nature has its own peculiar quality, whether consciously or unconsciously expressed, yet the perceptions of these qualities depend upon the nature of the perceiver, his understanding and knowledge. Good and evil are relative; Nature may not be classified as part good and part bad. The goodness, the passion and desire, the ignorance, indifference and folly are in ourselves. The path to Sattvic perception and perfection begins with the feeling of responsibility for thought, word and deed, and ends in unselfishness.

"The characteristics of *Rajas* are love of gain, activity in action — meaning the holding of external action as the end in view; the initiating of works; restlessness and inordinate desire, producing thirst and propensity for possessions of any and every kind; loudness of speech; obtrusiveness in manner and action, and self-assertion in many ways.

Tamas shows itself in "indifference or darkness," as the chapter notes. Here it would seem that "indifference" and "darkness" are synonymous terms; for that which we call indifference arises from ignorance of the true nature of things, events, and beings; it might be called the selfishness of ignorance. There are, of course, many degrees of *Tamas*, as many in fact as there are minds, for *Tamas* is indicated wherever there is ignorance, folly, idleness, and delusion in any degree.

Thus one may express Sattvic-Rajasic or Sattvic-Tamasic qualities; Rajasic-Tamasic or Rajasic-Sattvic; Tamasic-Sattvic or Tamasic-Rajasic, in variable and varying degrees at different times according as one is carried away by personal feeling.

Even *Sattva* may be of that kind which expresses a harmless selfishness; the love of knowledge, of goodness and pleasantness for one's own sake (or the doing of righteous acts for the reward which follows them; while these bring a fair and pleasant existence, the results obtained from them are temporary, and at the same time bind one to physical existence.

The highest path, and that which leads to emancipation, is "separation from the three qualities. Of course, there is in reality no separation possible in the ordinary sense of the term — "separation" here means non-identification. It is *Ahankara*, self-identifying attachment with the ever-changing forms, conditions and relations of physical existence that makes the real "separation" and binds men to re-birth in a world, which they make one of infinitely more suffering than of joy. "He, O son of Pandu, who doth not hate these qualities — illumination, action and delusion — when they appear, nor longeth for them when they disappear; who, like one who is of no party, sitteth as one unconcerned about the three qualities and undisturbed by them, who being persuaded that the three qualities exist, is not moved by

them; who is of equal mind in pain and pleasure, with those who like or dislike the same whether praised or blamed; equally minded in honor or disgrace; the same toward friendly or unfriendly side, engaging only in necessary actions, such an one hath surmounted the qualities."

CHAPTER XV
DEVOTION THROUGH KNOWLEDGE OF THE SUPREME SPIRIT

> "MEN say that the *Ashwattha*, the eternal sacred tree, grows with its roots above and its branches below, and the leaves of which are the *Vedas*; he who knows this knows the *Vedas*."

In these words Krishna presents a symbol used by men to indicate the universe as an eternal evolutionary stream, proceeding from a changeless Source. This Source, though changeless Itself, produces change in ever-increasing differentiations throughout the great period of manifestation. When the limit of differentiation is reached, the same impulse gradually indraws all differentiations toward homogeneity. This evolutionary process is graphically symbolized in *The Secret Doctrine* as the Great Breath, with its periodical outbreathing and inbreathing. Neither the "outbreathing" nor the "inbreathing," nor both together, describe or constitute the Great Breath, for these are actions by That which has the power to so act. As Krishna states it in this chapter, "It is the Primeval Spirit from which floweth the never-ending stream of conditioned existence."

"The leaves of which are the *Vedas*," refers specifically to the sacred scripture of the time; at the same time it should be understood as applicable to sacred scriptures of all times, for these are but formulations by men of portions of the eternal verities; formulations which present in concrete form such spiritual, philosophical and ethical ideals as exist among men at the time of formulation. These formulations are here properly symbolized by "leaves," for they shoot forth from the branches (the three qualities), have their period of manifestation and are replaced by other "leaves".

"Its form is not thus understood by men; it has no beginning, nor can its present constitution be understood, nor has it any end." This sentence may be comprehended better if read in connection with the second paragraph of the chapter: "It is even a portion of myself which, having assumed life in this world of conditioned existence, draweth

together the five senses and the mind in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again." This power to draw together and to disperse is that of the Supreme Spirit; it is the Self, the Real Man, "a portion of myself" in every human form, as well as in all forms. It is not thus understood by men who are bound by *Ahankara*, the self-identifying tendency of the thirteenth chapter, but it may be realized by "those who are free from pride of self and whose discrimination is perfected, who have prevailed over the fault of attachment to action, who are constantly employed in devotion to meditation upon the Supreme Spirit, who have renounced desire and are free from the influence of the opposites known as pleasure and pain." Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit comes from identification with It; realization comes from dwelling upon the thing to be realized. The "power to perceive" is the very essence of our being, our perceptions are not that power, they are the exercise of it; our perceptions are the bases of our actions; it is because we identify ourselves with our perceptions that we are deluded and bound by the actions that flow from them.

"There are two kinds of beings in the world, the one divisible, the other indivisible; the divisible is all things and the creatures" — that is, all forms and objects of every kind, since every form and object is composed of minor forms or expressions of life or consciousness.

Our bodies, for instance, are composed of mineral, vegetable and animal lives and substance; these are borrowed from the three kingdoms below us and are returned to them; hence the term "divisible". "The indivisible is called Kutastha, or he who standeth on high unaffected". In every composite form — and all forms are that — there is a synthetic consciousness which has evolved and sustains that form; that synthetic power is unaffected by any changes in the form. In Man Kutastha would seem to indicate the Divine Ego, whose divinity and spiritual nature remain as such through all forms and changes.

> "But there is another spirit designated as the Supreme Spirit — *Paramatma* — which permeates and sustains the three worlds. As I am above the divisible and superior to the indivisible, therefore both in the world and in the *Vedas* am I known as the Supreme Spirit. He who being not deluded knoweth me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knoweth all things and worships me under every form

and condition."

Devotion through Knowledge of the Supreme Spirit begins with a recognition that there is but one Spirit, the source and sustainer of everything that exists. As the *Upanishads* say: "the Self shines in all, but in all it does not shine forth". The Self is in all things, and all things are in the Self. Whatever there may be of "shining" through any form or under any condition, that "shining" is from and of the Self. If this is recognized and admitted, we must begin to regard all things and beings in that light and act towards them upon that basis; in this way we act for and as the Self, and as we hold to and follow that practice, all ideas, habits and desires that conflict become overcome little by little, until at last we have the supreme power for good that comes with selflessness.

CHAPTER XVI
DEVOTION THROUGH DISCRIMINATING BETWEEN GODLIKE AND DEMONIACAL NATURES

IN this chapter Krishna begins with an enumeration of the "godlike" qualities. It will be noted that these qualities or virtues are not so numerous as they are comprehensive and complementary, and that taken as a whole, they fully express the title under which they are assembled — a godlike nature.

When we come to examine these qualities from the modern point of view and compare one with another, we may find it difficult to reconcile some with others: as for instance, "power" and "fearlessness" with "freedom from conceit". Our individualistic tendencies incline us to think that a sense of superiority is necessarily present with power and the absence of fear. And again, if we take the simplest, most definite and most easily understood of these qualities, "not speaking of the faults of others", we see only a pale and negative virtue. Yet fault-finding is the most universal and most insidious expression of conceit and self-assertion. Speaking of and pointing out the faults of others is a vice which masquerades under many forms of virtue but in reality it is used to hide our own faults and present the appearance of a righteousness we do not possess — a vice which perpetuates self-delusion and negatives every apparent virtue. St. Paul, the Initiate, in *I. Corinthians*, Chap. XIII, says in this regard:

> "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass and tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."

Charity implies the possession of all the virtues, for they are all included in it; it implies the absence of fault-finding and condemnation. But charity is not negative; that which makes charity effective is knowledge, not sentiment; hence the need of discriminating between what are here called "godlike" and "demoniacal" natures.

We must therefore enquire into the meaning of Discrimination. It is a faculty, or power, whose range and value depend entirely upon the knowledge and understanding of the individual using it. All men use this faculty but in as many different degrees as exist between the densest ignorance and the highest intelligence and wisdom. It may be called the ability to do the right thing, at the right time, and in the right place, on every plane of action. This necessitates a universal point of view, an understanding that covers the whole of nature, and a universal application of both.

The ancient wisdom of the *Gita* begins with universals and descends into particulars, this being the course of evolution. It posits One Spirit as animating all beings and all forms, and shows the universe to consist of an aggregation of evolved beings of innumerable grades, each with its own form and tendencies, and each acting according to its own acquired nature. Whatever accords with the acquired nature of each being, will appear to it as good; whatever obstructs or opposes it, will appear as evil; this being true, it is self-evident that good and evil are not things in themselves, but are appearances due to the of the perceiver towards things, forms, conditions and circumstances.

No such considerations as the above could be addressed to any being lower than Man, because he alone, of all those in physical forms, has reached that point of development of his acquired nature which enables him to grasp that which is above, as well as that which is below, and permits him to extend his range of perceptions in all directions. He has reached that point at which he can know himself to be Immortal, and may, if he wills, bring his acquired nature in accord with his own spiritual nature. All of his perceptions are of the "pairs of opposites"; without these he could never find himself, nor understand the natures of those who are struggling to free themselves from the binding force of with forms and conditions.

It must be understood that Man the Eternal Pilgrim, is not his perceptions, for they are always relative. In all perceptions are to be found "the pairs of opposites", for no perception could exist without them. Without darkness, there could be no perception of light; without pain, there could be no perception of pleasure; without sorrow, there could be no exception of joy; without sin, there could be no perception of holiness. That these perceptions are all relative to the Perceiver is shown in the fact that what is light to some is darkness to others; pleasure to some is pain to others; joy to some is sorrow to others; holiness to some is sin to others.

It is the lack of understanding of these facts in nature that produces every kind of "demoniacal nature," and there are many kinds. There are those who "know not the nature of action nor of cessation from action"; those who "deny that the universe has any truth in it, saying it is not governed by law, declaring that it hath no Spirit"; those who "seek by injustice and the accumulation of wealth for the gratification of their own lusts and appetites"; there are those who esteem "themselves very highly, self-willed, and full of pride, ever in pursuit of riches, they perform worship with hypocrisy and not even according to ritual (that which is known) but only for outward show; indulging in pride, selfishness, ostentation, power, lust and anger, they detest me (the One Spirit) who am in their bodies and in the bodies of others." What an arraignment this is of present day religions and systems of thought! All sects present formulas which must be accepted on faith, but which cannot be proved to be true. Many systems of thought affirm the unproven and unprovable and on facts of experience, thus ignoring law and justice in the universe; they deny the effects they perceive on one side of nature, and affirm as self-existent the effects they perceive of an opposite kind, deluding themselves by offsetting one effect against the other, and never perceiving the Cause of both effects. None of these religions and systems of thought as represented by their adherents have the faintest suspicion that they are but repetitions of the errors of past times and peoples; yet such is the fact known to every student of ancient literatures, religions and sciences, who has gained discrimination by means of "the pairs of opposites."

As before said, true discrimination proceeds from a universal point of view, an understanding of the whole of nature, and a universal

application of both. The universal point of view is that all manifested nature, including all things below Man, Man himself, and all beings above Man, as well as all forms, degrees of substance, and elements have proceeded from one Source, the One Spirit. The understanding comes from a realization that, from atom to the highest being, each is an expression of that One Spirit, and that from the faintest glimmering of perception in the lowest kingdom to the heights of Divine Knowledge, the path is the same for all under Law. Then comes the application of the knowledge gained.

The student must raise himself beyond "the influence of the pairs of opposites." He must see that these are but the means and modes necessary to give him ever-widening perception, and he must realize that he is the perceiver and not any nor all of his perceptions. And as he raises himself above that influence, he will find others like himself, and still others beyond who are of a godlike nature — who love and understand; who possess what appear to others as virtues, but which to them are but actions with spiritual knowledge as director; who understand the vices of men to be due to ignorance and not to innate wickedness; and who hence have patience, power and fortitude, universal compassion, modesty and mildness. They know that that which makes for evil can be turned into that which makes for good; that which makes for destructiveness can be turned into that which makes for constructiveness; that which makes for separation and selfishness can be turned into that which makes for unity and selflessness. So knowing, all nature is theirs, every power and element in it are their instruments; not that the relativities of good and evil can or should be destroyed, but that the spiritual identity of all beings shall be realized at every stage, and only such thought and action prevail as will bring about a harmonious progress towards perfection.

True Discrimination distinguishes between good, evil, and mixed natures. It knows that all human beings are inherently perfectible, and that the imperfections exist only in the lower acquired nature; that while this acquired nature exhibits itself in actions, its root lies in tendencies fostered by limited and erroneous conceptions. The effort is therefore not expended in classifications of comparative good and evil, nor is there any condemnation of any being because of the state in which he is found to be; the causes that have led up to each state are

shown, the right basis for thought and action is given, the landmarks upon the "small old path" that leads far beyond comparative good and evil are pointed out, and the pilgrim patiently helped, on every step of the way.

CHAPTER XVII
DEVOTION AS REGARDS THE THREE KINDS OF FAITH

THE twelfth chapter treats of Devotion through Faith founded on knowledge of the Supreme Spirit; the present chapter explains the nature of the faith of those who while they neglect the precepts of the Scriptures (recorded sacred knowledge), yet worship in faith.

Krishna says that the faith of mortals is of three kinds and is born from their own disposition, and that this faith partakes of the qualities of *Sattva*, truth; *Rajas*, action; and *Tamas*, indifference. These three qualities are specifically treated in the fourteenth chapter and the necessity is there shown for the seeker after truth to raise himself above their influence. The twelfth, fourteenth and seventeenth chapters should be studied together, as they are intimately related.

"The faith of each one proceeds from the *sattva* quality . . . the embodied soul being gifted with faith, each man is of the same nature as that ideal on which his faith is fixed." Here the word *sattva* should be given its highest definition, "the power to understand," which every embodied soul possesses, as contrasted with the limitations imposed upon that power by those who fix their faith upon some ideal of seeming good.

"Those who are of the disposition which ariseth from the prevalence of the *sattva* or good quality, worship the gods." "Gods" is a generic term covering many classes of invisible beings; here the reference is to that class of being which the worshipper believes to be endowed with supernatural powers and virtues, and from which is sought guidance and favors.

"Those of the quality of *rajas*, worship the celestial powers, the Yakshas and Rakshasas." That is, those in whom the desire for personal and selfish possessions and attainments prevail, seek the aid of, and attract, elemental beings who in an irresponsible way aid in such accomplishments; in other words, where the quality of *rajas* prevails, any external force that will aid in the fulfilment of desires is sought and welcomed, regardless of its nature or of the evil effect upon others.

Such forces or beings belong to the separative and destructive side of nature.

"Other men in whom the dark quality of indifference or *tamas* predominates worship elemental powers and the ghosts of dead men." Here, the elemental powers are those of the lowest class, and among them are the so-called "spirits" of the séance room, galvanized into a factitious presentation of life and intelligence by the medium and sitters. This lowest class of elementaries and elementals belongs to the grossest part of invisible nature, is nearest to the physical, and most easily aroused. The opening of the doors to this class arises from ignorance of man's true nature, and makes possible the delusion which fixes the faith on impermanent, irresponsible and vampirizing influences. *Tamas* also predominates in "those who practise severe self-mortification . . . are full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for what is past and desiring more to come; they, full of delusion, torture the powers and faculties which are in the body, and me also, who am in the recesses of the innermost heart; know that they are of an infernal tendency."

It is a matter of common knowledge that many kinds of self-inflicted bodily punishments and tortures prevail among certain devotees in the East as a means of development, and that even among Western peoples a similar idea at one time prevailed extensively, and perhaps still exists in some quarters. There is no doubt that these practices had their origin in a misunderstanding of a phrase frequently used in ancient scriptures "mortification of the body." In this chapter Krishna sets forth very clearly the true meaning of that phrase in these words: "Honoring the gods (beings higher than Man), the brahmans (those who have divine knowledge), the teachers (of knowledge), and the wise; purity, rectitude, chastity and harmlessness are called mortification of the body." That this is the true definition is shown by the fact that the body of itself is incapable of action, and is merely an organized aggregation of physical matter used and controlled by the thinker and actor within; it is this thinker and actor who needs to change his modes of thought and action. In changing from one mode of thought and action to an other of an opposite kind, the man finds himself at war with habits which he himself established; these have to be disestablished by the institution of habits in accord with his

changed basis. In a true sense this is mortification of the body, but from within outwards, not by any external means.

Similarly "austerities of speech" do not consist of a severity of tone and manner and a puritanical contempt for the average mortal and his interests, a state due to an in-growing self-righteousness, but are practised and shown in "Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures."

"Mortification of the Mind" is not effected by imposed prayers and penances, nor by offerings to any supposed deity, but by "Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, and absolute straightforwardness of conduct."

The chapter continues by saying "This three-fold mortification or austerity, practised with supreme faith, and by those who long not for a reward, is of the *sattva* quality."

> "But that austerity which is practised with hypocrisy, for the sake of obtaining respect for oneself, or for fame or favor, and which is uncertain and belonging wholly to this world, is of the quality of *rajas*."
>
> "Those austerities which are practised merely by wounding oneself, or from a false judgment, or for the hurting of another, are of the quality of *tamas*."

The idea prevails among Western peoples that the value of a gift lies in its intrinsic value; Krishna presents the contrary fact that the value of a gift lies entirely in the attitude of mind which accompanies the gift; this applies to gifts and benefactions of every kind, whether seasonal or not; whether to friends, relatives, acquaintances or stranger poor; it would be well to remember this in the season of Christmas and holiday giving.

Krishna specifies and qualifies the different attitudes as follows:

> "Those gifts which are bestowed at the proper time to the proper person, and by men who are not desirous of a return, are of the *sattva* quality, good and of the nature of truth.
>
> "But that gift which is given with the expectation of a return from the beneficiary, or with a view to spiritual benefit flowing there from, or with reluctance, is of the

rajas quality, bad, and partaketh of untruth.

"Gifts given out of place and season and to unworthy persons, without proper attention and scornfully, are of the *tamas* quality, wholly bad and of the nature of darkness."

What a commentary this is upon our Western ideas of charity as ordinarily dispensed, and particularly upon our charitable organizations. How many gifts or charities are bestowed without a view to spiritual benefit flowing therefrom? How many subscriptions are made to charities with reluctance, or from a desire to appear generous in the eyes of men? How many are given "out of place and season and to unworthy persons, without proper attention and scornfully?" Each one must answer for himself. It takes a very wise man to do good works without danger of doing incalculable harm; one such might by his great intuitive powers know whom to relieve and whom to leave in the mire that is their best teacher. The poor and wretched themselves will tell anyone who is able to win their confidence what disastrous mistakes are made by those who come from a different class and endeavor to help them. Kindness and gentle treatment will sometimes bring out the worst qualities of a man or woman who has led a fairly presentable life when kept down by pain and despair. The *Gita* teaches that the causes of misery do not lie in conditions or circumstances, but in the mistaken ideas and actions of the man himself; he reaps what he has sown in ignorance. A better knowledge of the nature of man and the purpose of life is needed; as this is acquired, the causes of misery are gradually eliminated. No greater charity can be bestowed upon suffering humanity than right knowledge that leads to right action. The possessor of this knowledge will be filled with divine sympathy for all sufferers; he will relieve only such distresses as should be relieved in each and every case, while at the same time he will impart as much of his greater knowledge as the sufferer can receive and apply. But he will not let his left hand know what his right hand does; he will have no thought of reward nor even of gratitude; he will simply do all that he can and the best he knows how to do to raise the sufferer to a higher plane of thought and action, while he affords sufficient physical relief to give a foothold.

This chapter is the last but one of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and perhaps as a chapter is the most comprehensive one, for it presents the One True Faith founded upon knowledge of the Supreme Spirit, the Self within, the Knower in every mortal body, and three kinds of false faiths fixed upon externalities. It considers true practices as the natural outcome of true faith, in contrast with erroneous practices based upon false faiths. It shows clearly that spiritual reliance placed upon any external being, thing or practice prevents right knowledge and true progress, and cannot fail to bring about detrimental karmic results.

Knowledge of and action for the Self of all — the Self within — is necessary in every thought, word and act, even in the providing of food for the body. Krishna does not enjoin any particular kind of food; he says that kind of food for each one is best "which increases the length of days, vigor and strength, which keeps one free from sickness, of tranquil mind and contented, and which is savory, nourishing, of permanent benefit and congenial to the body, is that which is attractive to those in whom the *sattva* quality prevaileth."

There are many who fix their faith on particular kinds of food and who endeavor to convert others to that particular kind of faith. They, like all others who fix their faith upon externalities, are "false pietists of bewildered soul." The question never is of kinds of food, but of fitness for each particular case; for when all is said and done, each body extracts from any kind of food only that which conforms to the nature of the possessor of the body, and that nature is subject to change from within. The main thing to be observed is to keep the body efficient as an instrument for the soul who inhabits it, by whatever means and food may be found necessary for that purpose. Here, like and dislike are set aside and only the purpose of soul is considered.

"The food which is liked by those of the *rajas* quality is over bitter, too acid, excessively salt, hot, pungent, dry and burning, and causeth unpleasantness, pain and disease." The faith being fixed on desire for personal possessions and attainments, desire becomes cumulative; each object obtained only stimulates the desire for more; this produces corresponding and cumulative tendencies in the body.

"Whatever food is such as was dressed the day before, that is tasteless or rotting, that is impure, is that which is preferred by those in

whom predominates the quality of *tamas* or indifference." Where *tamas* prevails there is a tendency for and affiliation with the lower elementals and elements of nature; the destructive and disintegrating side.

The last section of this chapter refers to the three-fold designation of the Supreme Spirit as Om, Tat, Sat, the triune Deity in its triple aspects corresponding to creation, preservation and destruction while re-creating, or in order to re-create. The word Om or Aum is at once an invocation of the highest within, a benediction, an affirmation, and a promise; its proper use is said to lead to a realization of the Self within. The Aum contains within itself all the aspects and implies the Universe controlled by the Supreme Spirit. It represents the constant current of meditation which ought to be carried on by every man, even while engaged in the necessary duties of life. There is for every conditioned being a target at which the aim is constantly directed; in the *Mundakya Upanishad* there is the following, "Om is the bow, the Self is the arrow, Brahman is called its aim. It is to be hit by a man who is not thoughtless; and then as the arrow becomes one with the target, he will become one with Brahman. Know him alone as the Self, and leave off other words. He is the bridge of the Immortal. Meditate on the Self as Om."

CHAPTER XVIII
DEVOTION AS REGARDS RENUNCIATION AND FINAL LIBERATION

THE chapter begins with this question from Arjuna: "I wish to learn, O great-armed one, the nature of abstaining from action and of giving up of the results of action, and also the difference between these two."

The whole of the chapter is devoted to the answer. Not only are the nature of abstaining from action and the giving up of the results of action involved in the reply, but an understanding of the very nature of action itself and the causes and bases of action. Relating to the "agents of action," Krishna says: "Learn, O great-armed one, that for the accomplishment of every work five agents are necessary as is declared. These are, the substratum, the agent, the various sorts of organs, the various and distinct movements, and with these, as fifth, the presiding deities. These five agents are included in the performance of every act which a man undertaketh, whether with his body, his speech, or his mind." Again, that "whoever, because of the imperfection of his mind, beholdeth the real self as the agent, thinketh wrongly and seeth not aright." It is thus evident that it is not the "real self" that acts, a statement that has been reiterated throughout the previous chapters, and one that it is necessary to understand before the nature of action is comprehended.

Prakriti or nature, is the cause of all action throughout the universe, as it is the basis by which action may take place; this is true on every plane of being. In the thirteenth chapter are these words: "Know that *prakriti* or nature and *Purusha* the spirit are without beginning. And know that the passions and the three qualities are sprung from nature. Nature or *prakriti* is said to be that which operates in producing cause and effect in actions; individual spirit or *Purusha* is said to be the cause of experiencing pain and pleasure. For spirit when invested with matter or *prakriti* experienceth the qualities which proceed from *prakriti*." This passage throws some light on the meaning of "the substratum:" it is substance in its primordial state from which all

differentiations proceed, and within which all differentiations are contained, and therefore forms the basic agent of all action; the word "agent" in the classification may be understood as the power which prompts to action; for instance, the personal self with its concrete and limited ideas, impels the organs of the body and the necessary movements to carry out the prevailing idea. The fifth "agent" is called "the presiding deities"; this latter term may be explained in this way: our bodies are composed of small lives of many different kinds, each of those kinds acting only in response to particular impulses; each class acts according to its own nature, and as a class constitutes a hierarchy of being, *devas* or deities.

It is understood, of course, that That from which all power to perceive or to cause action emanates is the Self of All; that power becomes particularized, so to speak, in the Individual Self, who on higher planes is the impeller of actions on those planes; on the physical plane, the Personal self is but a temporary aspect of the Individual Self, this aspect being sometimes called the "false ego" because of its delusion; it is this personal self which consciously or unconsciously to itself impels the lives in his bodily organs to action.

Now we may understand better this passage from the fifth chapter: "the devotee who knows the divine truth thinketh, 'I am doing nothing' in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing; even when speaking, letting go or taking, opening or closing his eyes, he sayeth, 'the senses and organs move by natural impulse to their appropriate objects.' "It has been said that the Self neither acts nor is acted upon; this must be true also of the Personal self, for, as the thirteenth chapter says: "the spirit in the body is called Maheswara, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the *Paramatma*, the highest soul." The self or spirit in the body is deluded by the three qualities perceived in nature, liked or disliked, and identifies itself with the actions it induces. "He who seeth that all his actions are performed by nature only, and that the self within is not the actor, sees indeed." There is also this passage, "The path of action is obscure. That man who sees inaction in action and action in inaction is wise among men."

If we reconstruct our ideas in regard to action as above indicated, it will throw a new light on karmic responsibility, connecting us more

intimately with all selves, all lives small and great, and assist us to a better realization of acting for and as the Self. Having determined, to some extent at least, the nature of action, we have aroused to that extent what Krishna calls "the discerning power," which is also called *Buddhi*, direct cognition, the highest intellection, the power of judgment, according to its various degrees of activity. These degrees flow from attraction to one or other of the three qualities found in nature, and are described as follows: "The discerning power that knows how to begin and to renounce, what should and what should not be done, what is to be feared and what not, what holds fast and what sets the soul free, is of the *sattva* quality. That discernment, O son of Pritha, which does not fully know what ought to be done and what not, what should be feared and what not, is of the passion-born *rajas* quality. That discriminating power which is enveloped in obscurity, mistaking wrong for right and all things contrary to their true intent and meaning, is of the dark quality of *tamas*."

With the "discerning power" there must also be the "power of steadfastness," for unless we are constant in devotion to the higher life, and the ideal of a conscious life in spirit, not matter, we will be recreant to the best we know. Having reached the power of discernment and having been shown the path which to us is peculiarly ours, we should set aside all other considerations that tend to draw us from it; we should cultivate and practise "That power of steadfastness holding the man together, which by devotion controls every motion of the mind, the breath, the senses and the organs;" this, as the chapter says, "partaketh of the *sattva* quality;" that is, the whole instrument is used for the best and highest purpose only.

The "power of steadfastness" may exist without the highest power of discernment, as in the one who looking for the fruits of action, cherishes duty, pleasure and wealth from the point of view of desire or *rajas*; or in the man of low capacity who stays fast in drowsiness, fear, grief, vanity and rashness, bound by the *tamas*ic quality.

If we have determined for ourselves the nature of action, the goal of true discernment, and steadfastness which is harmony of thought, will, and feeling, as well as an action on the lines of our determination, we can only have done so through something of that "wisdom which perceives in all nature one single principle, indivisible and

incorruptible, not separate in the separate objects seen" and which is of the *sattva* quality. It is the changeless Self within, which, if we follow the lines of our determination, we will come to realize more and more.

There can be no realization of Self in that kind of knowledge "which perceives different and manifold principles as present in the world of created beings," or in "that knowledge, wholly without value, which is mean, attached to one object alone as if it were the whole, which does not see the true cause of existence."

All our thoughts give rise to action among the lives which compose our astro-physical instrument, and, as we never cease thinking, action continually goes on, for, as often said, "thought is the real plane of action." Even though we may not contemplate any immediate bodily act, we may by our thoughts accumulate a tendency in the lives of our instrument which will eventually result in outward action whenever favoring conditions permit, and we will fail victims to our lack of discernment and steadfastness, as well as involve others in our fate.

"Now hear what are the three kinds of pleasure wherein happiness comes from habitude and pain is ended." We may get some understanding of this sentence if we consider that when some ardently desired aim or object is sought and found, there is at first happiness, and the pain of non-attainment is ended. But the happiness does not remain the same; it resolves itself into contentment and habitude, until the latter becomes wearisome, and another aim or object is sought.

"That which in the beginning is as poison and in the end as the water of life, and which arises from a purified understanding, is declared to be of the *sattva* quality." The pursuit of desires brings a beginning of sweetness and an ending of bitterness; the pleasure gained from idleness, carelessness and indifference stupifies the soul. To arouse oneself from desiring, or from carelessness and indifference is at first "as poison," but with a purified understanding becomes "the water of life."

The statement that "there is no creature on earth nor among the hosts of heaven who is free from these three qualities which arise from nature," points to the fact that the three qualities exist on every plane of being.

The hard and fast hereditary castes of India of the present day are not meant by the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras of this chapter. In earlier days, before the ancient teaching had become materialized, marriage was a sacred and religious contract; family life was so understood and conducted as to provide proper environment for egos of the same nature as the family on spiritual, psychical and other lines. Then there existed natural castes where all lines of heredity conjoined; in these degenerate days the castes are mixed and there are those born in castes whose nature does not conform to the original caste whose name and privileges they take and abuse. Nevertheless, the castes exist everywhere; but no longer does social position or physical environment distinguish them. In all countries at the present time, there are those in high place and power who by nature are Sudras, and many who are Brahmans by nature are lower in our social scale, for this is *Kali Yuga* when the powers of darkness are in the ascendancy.

The ancient castes performed duties which were the outcome of their several natures, and were so recognized by all. There was no pride of caste nor jealousy and there existed an ideal community of mutual helpfulness; hence, the duties of the castes were "determined by the qualities which predominated in each."

> "Men being contented and devoted to their own proper duties (that for which their nature fits them) attain perfection." . . . "If (in all that he does) a man maketh offering to the Supreme Being who is the source of the works of all and by whom this universe was spread abroad, he thus obtaineth perfection." . . . "The performance of the duties of a man's own particular calling, although devoid of excellence, is better than doing the duty of another, however well performed; and he who fulfills the duties obligated by nature does not incur sin. A man's own natural duty, even though stained with faults, ought not to be abandoned. . . . The highest perfection of freedom from action is attained through renunciation by him who has an unfettered mind and subdued heart."

Dharma is the word which in our language is translated as "duty," but it has a much wider range and meaning than that which we accord

to the word "duty." There are many who think that duty is something that others think we should do; others again consider "duty" to be irksome, and as actions to be performed under duress, and therefore to be avoided; it is therefore necessary to grasp the meaning of the word "duty" as used in the *Gita*. *Dharma* means "the sacred Law," the fulfillment of our karmic destiny through many incarnations, the working out and elimination of defects which have brought us into earth life under the conditions in which we find ourselves, which conditions we should feel and know to be the very opportunities needed for our further progress. This is why one of the great Teachers wrote:

> "Duty is the royal talisman; duty alone will lead us to the goal."

Krishna enumerates the attainments by which "a man is fitted to be the Supreme Being. And having thus attained to the Supreme, he is serene, sorrowing no more, and no more desiring, but alike towards all creatures he attains to supreme devotion to me. By this devotion to me he knoweth fundamentally who and what I am and having thus discovered me he enters into me without any intermediate condition. And even the man who is always engaged in action shall attain by my favor to the eternal and incorruptible abode, if he put his trust in me alone. . . . And if, indulging self-confidence, thou sayest 'I will not fight,' such a determination will prove itself vain, for the principles of thy nature will impel thee to engage. Being bound by all past karma to thy natural duties, thou, O son of Kunti, wilt involuntarily do from necessity that which in thy folly thou wouldst not do."

> "There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master — Ishwara — who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of Bharata, with all thy soul; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place."

"Wherever Krishna, the supreme Master of devotion, and wherever the son of Pritha, the mighty archer may be, there with certainty are fortune, victory, wealth, and wise action." Each one is Krishna and

Arjuna; where these two are joined together, all nature makes obeisance.

In closing this series of comments on "*The Bhagavad-Gita*," we need, perhaps, give no reminder that only the surface of the teachings contained in the ancient book is touched upon. The viewpoint taken, out of the seven different applications possible, is that of the individual, in accordance with Mr. Judge's early comments, but even from that viewpoint, the field has been by no means fully covered. It is hoped, however, that enough has been said to afford at least a little more light to those who aspire to learn the Science of Devotion.

END OF NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD–GITA

GĪTĀ YOGA

> I am the source of all. From Me everything emanates. Thinking thus, the wise worship Me, absorbed in ecstatic contemplation.
>
> With their consciousness centered upon Me, with their vital energies drawn into Me, enlightening each other, constantly conversing about Me, they feel contented and revel in delight.
>
> To those who are constantly yoked; and worship Me with love, I confer that intuitive understanding (buddhiyoga) by which they approach Me.
>
> Out of pure compassion for them, dwelling in their inmost self, I destroy the darkness born of ignorance by the brilliant lamp of wisdom.
>
> *Bhagavad Gītā X*.8-11

Five thousand years ago Lord Krishna, the enigmatic and legendary Teacher who came at the beginning of *kali yuga*, both ended a cycle and struck a keynote for the long Dark Age into which humanity would be plunged. On the battlefield of duty, *kurukshetra*, which was *dharmakshetra*, Krishna, the charioteer, made a striking and puzzling statement to the mighty archer, Arjuna – who went through all the many vagaries and ambivalences of friendship and discipleship, and indeed at the end proved himself to have been a worthy friend and pupil of Krishna. After revealing great mysteries to Arjuna through the universal vision of the Divine Eye, Krishna said to Arjuna: But what availeth all this knowledge to thee, O Arjuna? Upholding this entire universe with a single fragment of Myself I still stand apart. (X.42) This statement points to the profoundly elusive relations between the transcendent and the immanent, the unmanifest and the manifest, in all subsequent theologies and concepts of the Godhead. Put forward here in a dramatic manner that seems personified, nevertheless it has the curious obscurity of an impersonal cosmic enigma. There is a world and yet there is no world. The world has a Mind and a *Logos*, and yet it does not. There is meaning to the world and yet there is absurdity to it.

There is a supreme concern and compassion in the world flowing from whatever precedes it, whatever sustains and nourishes it, whatever destroys and re-creates it. At the same time, there is a supreme detachment that may sound to some almost like cold indifference.

Although it is a classical formulation, the importance of the statement is not merely what it says about Krishna. Like everything else that a Great Teacher does, it is meant to release in Arjuna authentic representations of an archetypal stance. Whatever part he chose or course of action he took, it was possible for Arjuna to have unconditional help from Krishna. It was also possible for Arjuna – in relation to his world – both to be involved and to stand outside it. This central message of Krishna became a clue for ancient warriors who were torn between deploring the end of what looked like a Golden Age in comparison to what was emerging, and nurturing a deep concern to preserve and maintain something sacred in the New Age. Thus, the *Gītā* became a keynote pointing to a new modulus of growth, a principle of self-reliance not merely grounded in individual human nature but also serving as a basic pattern for social structures.

Lord Krishna strings the sacred teachings of the *Bhagavad Gītā* on the golden thread of mental posture, the relation between the spiritual seeker and Divine Wisdom embodied as the Light of the *Logos* in lustrous beings. Mental posture refers primarily to an attitude of mind, and constitutes the sacred trust between *chela* and *guru*. Those who wish to become sincere and true servants of all humanity with its immense suffering, and of the Great Masters of Wisdom with their inexhaustible light, must prepare themselves by a process of purgation whereby they negate the false conceptions of themselves derived from the world into which they are born through their heredity, upbringing, environment and education. This is done by a method of intense self-questioning. Upanishadic-Platonic thought is essentially a dialogue with oneself. When people really begin to ask questions of themselves, and also attempt to apply the principles evolved in formulating questions in a multiplicity of contexts, then they gradually begin to glimpse the dynamic, albeit mysterious, relation between the manifest and the unmanifest.

One may compare wisdom to light – the ineffable light of the Invisible Sun. But is this light obscured in a solar eclipse? Actually, it is then even more accessible to men of meditation. Is this light inaccessible during an eclipse of the moon? Not to men of meditation. But alas, most human beings are not men of meditation and the eclipse of wisdom in the Kali Age can be disheartening to the unwary. They have never really thought seriously, hungered sufficiently, wanted with enough intensity of one-pointed devotion the timeless teaching of the immortality of the soul. Divine Wisdom can come alive only through the *manas taijasī*, the thinking principle irradiated by the buddhic fire of the divine dialectic. Before *buddhi* can become one with *manas*, before Truth and Love can be brought together in a mystic marriage, however, there is a preliminary betrothal. For this, the thinking principle must sunder its false allegiance to the shadowy self.

All human beings, every day of their lives, are involved unconsciously in the quest for wisdom. When they become postulants or neophytes, they are put on a preliminary probation and can be received as disciples only after they have completed preliminary qualifications. All of these involve a reorientation of their basic outlook in relation to who they are, why they were born, their attitude to the moment of death, where they are going, the meaning of every relationship, and above all whether they are ready to pledge themselves irreversibly towards that which they find irresistible – the great thrill that accompanies the light of daring lit up in the heart, the thrill of compassionate service to the whole of suffering humanity.

At the very beginning of the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā*, there is an extraordinary statement which is crucial to comprehension of the path towards wisdom. Having first established the inexhaustible nature of this *yoga*, Krishna states that the Secret and Sacred Science was first communicated to Vivasvat – the primordial manifestation of the Divine Wisdom within the vast cosmic depths, understood in the *Kabbalah* as the Ancient of Days, and in the *New Testament* as "That which was in the beginning". It is eternal and yet a reflection of itself is the first light in every great period of manifestation. It was transmitted through Vaivasvata Manu, the essential root-type of terrestrial mankind in existence for millions of years. Then it was communicated to Ikshvāku, the mighty brotherhood of *mahātmas*. Their compassion is

boundless and their concern is profound for the primary needs of every epoch. They recognize the mathematical accuracy of the harmonic law of cycles under which there may be permitted from age to age – for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the demoniac, and the establishment of righteousness – the timely promulgation of Divine Wisdom by the *Avatar*s who come as the Great Teachers of humanity.

Any human being in any part of the world who retires at night with a true feeling of responsiveness to the travails of suffering humanity receives help in deep sleep if his inmost self turns towards Ishvara. The intensity of desire, the propriety of motive and the devotion of the heart will necessarily determine the infallible beneficent response that comes from within deep sleep, and will also enable one to tap the pristine vibrations brought down by earnest sacrificial meditations from the peaks of universal ideation into the surrounding magnetosphere of the globe. Therefore, after Krishna says that the sacred teaching was communicated to Vivasvat and to Manu and also to Ikshvāku, and then to the *rājarshis*, the royal sages behind the chief dynasties of all the ancient kingdoms which witnessed the forgotten renaissances of antiquity, he says to Arjuna: This same immemorial teaching of *yoga* I have declared to thee today; for thou art my devotee and friend, and this esoteric teaching is truly exalted. (IV.3)

Any person who seeks the supernal radiance of the Invisible Sun, the ceaseless vibration of the *Logos* ensouling the unbroken lineage of the Fraternity of Enlightened Seers, must abide at all times with heart fixed upon the object of his devotion. He must be worthy of that total devotion, continually practising meditation, returning his mind whenever possible to its favourite subject of contemplation, the *Logos* that is the noumenal force behind the whole of life. Only then can he truly say that he has found the Krishna-Christos within himself. Only then does he activate and arouse, by his realization of the *Logos* in the cosmos, the Spirit which moves and animates every single atom and molecule, endowing each with that vortical motion which maintains it for a time in the world of manifestation, thereby enabling it to have life in a form under law. To do this he must take Krishna as his refuge. He must have total trust and faith in the chosen one, the *ishtaguru*.

To sense this is to ask questions about meaning, rooted in experience. But questions about meaning become real only when they are rooted in experience of pain. Where one's experience of pain is inserted into the pain of humanity, there is universality in the quality of the suffering, in the myriad dimensions of experience and in the hunger for meaning. Thus it is that Krishna endorses indifference to the multitude of differences abounding in the world. All offerings are the Supreme Spirit. The sacrificial butter is the Supreme Spirit. All is the Supreme Spirit. All comes back into the One, but in coming back into the One, the great choice for man is in relation to the whole or the part, the living or the dying, the future or the past: That which is unchanging or that which is ever changing; That which is indestructible, though invisible, or that which is both perishable and visible. One may choose That which is the eternal witness, the inmost sanctuary, the protective power within the immortal soul of every man. This soul-power can be released by any human being, despite all the confusions, muddles, mistakes, self-deceptions, rationalizations and wanderings in the dark. Somewhere the wonderings in relation to the light persist and all else drifts away as autumnal leaves.

It is possible to adopt a proper mental posture in relation to That which is spaceless and timeless, dateless and deathless, That which existed before birth and That which will exist alter the moment of death. To do this within oneself is to find that the whole universe is a magnificent unbound encyclopaedia of answers, and that the whole of life is an unending series of questions. When one starts to move in the world with questioning in the heart; when one starts to see all others in terms of those fundamental and enduring questions that concern all human beings; and when the questioning becomes a quest, then life is a single question that cannot be answered without meditation upon birth, death, decay, sickness, but above all, upon error. When one meditates on all of these, in time one's life becomes not only a quest, but a beatific, ceaseless contemplation. Then a person comes closer to the great mystery of the fourth chapter of the *Gītā*, which teaches: He who sees action in inaction, and inaction in action, is wise among men. Even whilst accomplishing all action, he remains established in *yoga*. (IV. 18) There is action during deep sleep. There is inaction amidst the daily round and the common task, the milling crowds, lost and

confined, cribbed and cabined, within the cast-iron cage of their personal consciousness and vociferating on behalf, not of the universal good, but of their own little selves.

Behind this masquerade there is the Soundless Sound. The *Māndūkya Upanishad* says that eventually we truly come to recognize, to revere and to renounce everything for the sake of the One – OM TAT SAT – That which is beyond all colours and forms, all limitations, all labels, all distinctions, all beginnings, changes and endings. We see beyond all conditions and conditionality itself when we feel that the unconditional is not distant but closer to us than our own heart. We become that which all beings are, at different degrees of knowledge and forgetfulness, but which we can self-consciously embody. Though there are many things we remember and also many that we forget, we are that which could never be remembered and could never be forgotten because it is beyond and behind memory. It is beyond and behind the limbos and the Lethe of delusive forgetfulness. It is that primordial pulse that precedes all manifestation and transcends what we call recorded history. It is older than billions of years and is vaster than outer space. Behind and beyond all the labels which humanity hugs, there is a boundless ocean and an eternal river. Like Hesse's Siddhārtha, we may learn from the ferryman the great secret. Those who come to the river ask all kinds of questions, but most are questions about money or time, questions about all the other people who come, questions on behalf of themselves. But he who has watched it all knows that there are great sounds of every kind in the river. Because he has seen behind and beyond all the ripples on the surface of the river, he has sensed a tremendous compassion in the very depths of the waters.

Everyone is provided for, everyone is protected, everyone is helped. But those alone who embody Krishna's precepts will know Him completely. They alone will be instructed fully in this knowledge and in this realization, having learnt which, there remains nothing else to be known. Clearly, this is an unattainable ideal for the average person in our time and in our culture. He cannot possibly expect suddenly to achieve that continuity of consciousness, that ceaseless contemplation, that total devotion, and above all, that unwavering and absolute allegiance to the one shelter and source chosen. He will not attain to

this knowledge in this lifetime. He will not hear the pure strains of the flute of Krishna. Nonetheless, there is hope for every human being. Every human being does in some moments experience the simple joys of daily life known to the great masses of mankind. No wonder that Krishna, the eighth *Avatar* of Vishnu, is the favoured incarnation among the common folk in India. No wonder the *Gītā* spoke so powerfully to Thoreau and Bellamy in America, to Wilkins and Warren Hastings among the early Englishmen in India, and to Schlegel and Humboldt and many others in Germany. Anyone who has ever leafed through the sacred pages of the Song of the Lord has benefited, whether he turns to the mantramic rendition by William Quan Judge, or the poetic rendition by Sir Edwin Arnold, or the many literal and liberal translations that have been attempted over the last century. Even more richly blessed are those who have been privileged to study the *Gītā* together with that unexcelled and illuminating text known as the *Uttara Gītā*.

Everyone is included in the benediction of Krishna, in accordance with the karma of his "line of life's meditation". This is a difficult doctrine to understand. There are no distinctions in it between the saved and the damned. In this doctrine the only elect are those who are self-elected by the profundity of their overwhelming concern and continual sacrifice. Those who comprehend *adhiyajña*, the cosmic sacrifice, share in its celebration. Everyone must, in their own way, find the *Logos* within and light up the lamp of true spiritual discernment. In this fundamental sense, all human beings are provided for and what is important for anyone is not where he is but how he can do better. All beginnings are seminal and immensely significant. If one really wishes to listen to the sound of the divine flute, one must understand the dialogue within one's own consciousness, which is like the interplay between flute and harp in the haunting concerto of Mozart. It occurs between the divine promptings within oneself and the less rhythmic breathing of one's lower self. Through it, one can become self-consciously capable of appreciating the flute.

The message and meaning of the incarnation of Krishna, over five thousand and eighty-seven years ago, was to bring into the lives of men and women the beauty, the vital relevance and the abundant hope of the eternal rhythm of the cosmos. There is a critical sense in which

one's ability to hear the flute of Krishna is a function of one's receptivity, and receptivity requires spiritual knowledge. The Heart Doctrine springs from the heart and lights up the mind. It also involves all aspects of our lives. If, with our whole being, whether intermittently or continuously, we can sift within the stillness and solitude of our inmost calm, only then can we feel the presence, hear the sound and share the divine joy of the dance of the *Logos*. A person is deeply fortunate to have earned the opportunity to make such a consecration and, through devotion, to move in the mighty current of meditation sustained by those *mahātmas* who are the perpetual servants of the *Logos*.

No one can fully comprehend the *Bhagavad Gītā* the first time he reads it, nor indeed, even if he reads it every day for the whole of his life. There are Hindus who merely take one stanza and chant it daily. This helps, though it cannot substitute for a study of all eighteen chapters. Many people turn to the *Gītā* only in times of distress. They get solace, but it is transitory. There are others who learn the whole of the *Bhagavad Gītā* by heart in Sanskrit and intone it repeatedly. This may help as well, depending upon their state of consciousness. If they are thinking only of themselves, they have thereby blocked the inner channel to the divine flame concealed within and they cannot light the lamp of the heart. There are still others who invoke Krishna at festivals, for the sake of getting a child, or for the sake of the means of livelihood that will enable the family to go through another year in times of trouble. There are those who invoke Krishna for the sake of consecrating the simple little book children use in learning the alphabet. There are those who at certain times of the year exchange gifts in Krishna's name for the sake of bringing a little joy into the hearts of each other. Innumerable are the ways in which human beings seek to become worthy of relationship with Krishna, the Divine Lover, the supreme guardian of each devotee.

During the sad prelude to the Mahābhārata War, every effort had been made by Krishna, by myriad devices, to avoid a carnage that became increasingly inevitable. This was due to the demoniac will of one man – Duryodhana – and the weaknesses, compromises and corruptions of other men, coupled with the fear of taking decisions which could avoid what many knew would be a catastrophe. When all

attempts failed, Krishna made a speech in the court of the blind King Dhritarāshtra, father of all the sons who were now going to be arrayed on two sides in the arena of confrontation. As a child, Krishna was known as a prankster, and as a young man as a flute player who charmed the milkmaids. In his manhood he was first a slayer of demons, and later a counsellor to the court of King Dhritarāshtra. At the critical point, he came to the king and said, in one of the greatest speeches in the *Mahābhārata*: For the sake of a village, an individual may have to be sacrificed; for the sake of a nation, a village; for the sake of the world, a nation; for the sake of the universe, a world. The whole must prevail, not the part. Then he appealed to the king to avoid the horrors of war, saying, Bind that man. For the sake of the demoniac will, the insatiable insecurity, the endless egotism of one man who was sick, so many people must not suffer. It became clear to the whole court that this was not idle talk, but the king himself was too weak, too exhausted, to be able to take such a painful decision at that moment. A definite choice would have been impossible for him, given the habit of shilly-shallying.

Later, as the lines of battle were forming, Arjuna chose Krishna as his charioteer without really knowing why. Hence the questions raised by him in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Arjuna was so filled with doubt that he simply could not understand the implications of his choice or the meaning of the war until, in the ninth chapter, Krishna addressed him, saying: I shall now declare to thee, who art uncontentious, this supremely secret wisdom, together with its discriminative realization, knowing which thou shalt be emancipated from evil. (IX.1) Krishna then gave to Arjuna a vision of his Cosmic Form (*vishvarūpa*) because Arjuna had become unconditional in his devotion. Krishna does not do this for everyone, but because he excludes none and loves each and all, he can give each one something. Therefore, we are told: "Votaries of the gods go to the gods, votaries of the ancestors go to the ancestors, and worshippers of creatures go to the creatures. Verily, those sacrificing unto Me come to Me." (IX.25) He says of those who worship him silently and secretly as the Self of all creatures and manifested in any form and no form, as well as in the form of these chosen precepts, that they who know Me as the *adhibhūta*, the *adhidaiva* and also the *adhiyajña* – the One that underlies all elements, all gods and all

sacrifices – they verily know Me even at the time of death, their consciousness being ever absorbed in Me. (VII.30)

So inexhaustible is the joy of the *Gītā* that any person, even late in life or after repeated failures along the Path, may turn to it and hear the regenerating rhythms and authentic accents of Divine Wisdom. Even if a person were to feel that his whole life was meaningless and without importance to a single living being, still, in making his obeisance to Krishna, he will find that he is not excluded from the boundless generosity of the *Logos*. Enlightened beings like Krishna, Buddha and Christ and those of their tribe – the race of Immortals from the Isle of the Blessed who move among men in many guises – can help each and every man according to the manner of his devotion. "In whatever way", says Krishna, }men approach Me, in that way do I accept them; whatever path mankind follows, that is also Mine, O son of Pritha" (IV.11) The flute of Krishna sings of unconditional love and infallible help. The limits are only set by those who ask in relation to what they are ready to receive. This is the priceless teaching, replete with boundless joy and timeless relevance for every honest and humble seeker, for each blessed devotee.

The term 'devotion' remains one of the more beautiful words in the English language, its suggestive and sacred etymology harking back to the taking of a vow. At the popular level this may be seen in frenzied devotion to a secular cause such as that of a political party. There can be total commitment without any streak of scepticism. There is neither wavering nor weakening of such commitment, but it is focussed upon an abstract idea attached to some tangible form. Few human beings, however, can contain the vast energy of unconditional commitment within the vessel of any external organization. Attempts to do so in messianic politics merely re-enact what happened in earlier history in relation to dogmatic religion. Owing to the limitations of sectarian ideologies and organizational structures, and especially due to the difficulty of distinguishing between the impersonal immortal individuality and the changing personal mask, ardent votaries fall prey to self-righteousness, an outburst of exaggerated emotion mistaken for deep feeling. No wonder Socrates challenged Euthyphro's claims to knowledge of piety and holiness – the relation between gods and humans – the most exalted, elusive and mysterious of subjects,

wherein one's credential is the uncommon recognition that one does not really know. What was true in his day is even more evident in our own time. Many people are running away from past symbols of piety, from various forms of totalism and tokenism in churches, and from every kind of trivialized, degraded and vulgarized ritual and sacrament. But in rushing to the opposite extreme, pretending to be nihilists, they are often trapped in the tragic predicament of having no faith in themselves, not even enough to carry on from day to day. Muddled thinking and negative emotions reinforce each other, corrupting the psyche.

Devotion is much more than wanting to be devoted. It is far more than having a euphoric feeling, however holy this may seem at the time. Bhakti is a different order of consciousness from that involved in the expenditure of emotion. Its sovereign power can only flow freely from the *ātman*, the perpetual motion of transcendental light that shines upon every human soul. It is invoked through an inward prostration of the mind within the sanctuary of the heart towards the Light of the *Logos*. To ask how one can prostrate before that which one does not comprehend is to ask how to be humble before the great mystery of Nature, the vastitude of life or the saga of humanity. To be humble in this sense is not merely to say to oneself that one does not know, but also means that one can thrill with the thought of the *mysterium tremendum*. Even though one does not know its destiny or destination, one may feel reverence for the whole of humanity; though one cannot fathom the breadth or depth of Nature, one rejoices in one's kinship with Nature; though one has no final answer to the basic questions of life, one remains open towards the life process. Such simple devotion generates the proper mental posture, which Krishna depicts in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. It is neither too high nor too low, neither so abject that one cannot generate any enthusiasm nor so lofty that one is isolated within an ivory tower of self-delusion.

True *bhakti* comes to birth through the firm recognition of the unity of all life and the universality of the highest ideals and ideas conceived, transcending the human capacity to formulate and transmit them. When devotion continues undiminished through the trials that it necessarily brings, just as light increases the shadow – it renews itself. It must be put to the test, and it surely will be. One has to encounter the abyss; one has to be tried and tempted. Jesus had three great

temptations, of which a remarkably perceptive account is given by Dostoievsky in the story of the Grand Inquisitor. All Initiates go through trials, and they do this deliberately because, although those who are perfected before birth really need no tests, they compassionately re-enact the archetypal story for the sake of the human race. Any person can, from small beginnings, tap the immense potential power in a vow to give birth to lasting devotion. This cannot be done even with an authentic start and a self-sustaining rhythm unless it is fortified by the fearlessness and courage that are rooted in the invulnerable truth of one's devotion.

Devotion is rather like the harnessing of electrical energy. In order to be properly channelled to some end, the resistance or responsiveness of the conductor is crucial. Just as a river cannot rise above its source, the power of devotion is as great as the heights upon which it is focussed. Devotion is also affected by the clarity of the mental picture of the ideal, even though that evolving picture may fall short of the ideal, which, when fully realized, becomes so all-encompassing that it is beyond the possibility of formulation in words or any expression in particular modes. As Shelley knew,

> Rome's azure sky,
> Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
> The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

Devotion fundamentally alters the relation and ratio between the unmanifest and the manifest: what is not said is more important than what is said; what is not shown or seen is more suggestive than what is shown and seen. Francis Thompson exclaimed:

> O world invisible, we view thee,
> O world intangible, we touch thee,
> O world unknowable, we know thee
> Inapprehensible, we clutch thee!

This celebrates the passage from the region of māyā to the realm of sat. One of the oldest invocations in the Upanishads is:

> Lead me from the unreal to the real!
> Lead me from darkness to light!
> Lead me from death to immortality!

Lord Krishna came at a time when he knew that humanity could not go back and restore the child-state of antiquity. He also knew that human beings in *kali yuga* were going to be enormously vulnerable to self-righteous merchants of the moral language who narrow and limit conceptions of duty and morality by institutionalizing them, thereby binding human beings through fear to mere externalities of conduct. Therefore an alternative had to be shown. Being magnificently generous, Krishna speaks at the widest cosmic level of how the *Logos* functions out of only a small portion of itself and yet remains totally uninvolved. It is like the boundless ocean on the surface of which there are many ships, and in which there are many aquatic creatures, though the depths of that boundless ocean remain still. The whole world may be seen from the standpoint of the *Logos*, which is essentially incapable of incarnating and manifesting within the limitations of differentiated matter. The *Logos* can only overbrood. This overbrooding is joyous, producing myriad kaleidoscopic reflections within which various creatures get engaged, act and become caught.

For the sake of all beings enmeshed in this *māyā*, Krishna incarnates the immortal standpoint and sovereign perspective of divine activity, which is all sacrifice. That is the critical relationship between the unmanifest and the manifest, for if the unmanifest can never be fully manifested, how can the manifest ever be linked to the unmanifest? There is always in everything that is manifest, behind the form, behind the façade, a deathless core of the very same nature and essence as that which is unmanifest. Where a human being can, by the power of thought, bring this to the centre of individual consciousness, it is possible to consecrate. It is possible to act as if each day corresponds to the Day of an entire universe, or to a lifetime. It is possible to act in each relationship as if it were a supreme expression of the very highest sacrificial relationships between teacher and pupil or mother and child. It is possible to act in a small space as if there were the possibility of an architecture and a rearrangement with analogues to the grand arrangements of solar systems and galaxies.

This is the great gift of creative, constructive imagination without illusion. What makes it Wisdom-Sacrifice is that one trains personal consciousness – the chattering mind, the divided and wandering heart, the restless hands. One centres all of these energies around a single

pivotal ideal, having no expectations. An ordinary human being with no expectations whatsoever would simply die, because, typically, a person lives on the basis of some confused and vague expectations in regard to tomorrow, next year and the future. Deny a human being all expectations, all claims, and personal consciousness usually will collapse. Of course this must not be done from the outside. The shock would be too great. But human beings can administer the medicine to themselves progressively and gradually. Merely look at the years already lived and see how many expectations have been built up. Either you dare not look back at them and how they were falsified – which means there is a cowardliness, a lie in your very soul – or you have replaced them so fast by other expectations that you are caught in a web of externalizing expectations. To initiate a breakthrough you can earnestly think, "Supposing I have only one day more to live; supposing everything that I have is taken away from me; supposing I can rely on nothing and expect nothing. What would be the meaning of joy, the dignity of grief?"

At that point, if a person thinks of Lord Krishna, of the unthanked *mahātmas* and adepts, and thinks of them not as distant from the human scene but as the ever-present causal force behind the shadow-play of history, then he finds an incredible strength in that thought, a strength in consciousness, but without a solidification of the object of consciousness. One can act with a freedom that is ultimately rooted in total actionlessness, like the supreme light of the *ātman* which is in eternal motion but which is not involved in what we call motion, refracted by differentiated matter. At the same time, one can live as if each act is supremely important, sublimely sacred. The person who really thinks this out trains himself in this mode of thinking, feeling, breathing, acting and living, and can in time gain a new lightness and economy, a fresh conception of real necessity, but above all a fundamental conception of identity merely as one of manifold unseen and unknown sacrificial instruments of the one *Logos*.

This is the root teaching of *jñānayajña* which, stated in this way, looks difficult, but is at the same time at some level accessible to each. It is a teaching so sacred that it is veiled in the *Gītā* – hidden when it is given in the fourth chapter and again at the very end of the eighteenth chapter. It is a teaching which, if fully grasped, is the gateway to

freedom and will enable one to become karmaless, to avoid becoming caught through the mind in the intertwining chains of karma. Clearly, karmalessness was not possible for the humanity of golden ages in remote antiquity. But it had all the ingredients of the sacrificial quality which must belong to the mature person of the present when adopting the standpoint of those pioneers of the future who act self-consciously with a universal perspective and without residue, without becoming involved in the externalities or, as Gaudapāda taught, without leaving any footprints.

The difficulty of this can be appreciated when we recall that in the fourth chapter of the *Gītā*, Krishna says that there are some who sacrifice the in-breathing in the out-breathing, whilst others chant the texts and still others actually surrender themselves. All these sacrifices arise out of action. They arise out of the non-Self and retain the illusion of an agent. In every one of these sacrifices we can distinguish archetypally five elements. There is the oblation offered in sacrifice. There is the fire into which it is offered. There is the instrument – a ladle or whatever – with which the offering is placed in the fire. Then there is the agent, the 'I', the person who says, "I am performing the sacrifice." There is the object of the sacrifice. All of these exist at one level in a universe of differentiated matter, constituted of innumerable beings that are ever at work and interacting in ceaseless motion. There is the interplay of subject and object, the deceptive contrast between light and shadow. There are separate objects and a background. All of this is *māyā*, the projective yet veiling power of the *Logos*, of the Ishvara, of Krishna.

All human beings are fallen gods, thinking beings with a highly complex brain that no animal possesses, blessed with the sacred gift of speech. Each human being already has the highest faculties. Each one has the sovereign powers of choice and imagination (the king faculty), which are both essential to the *guru-chela* relationship. Even though it may be, as Thoreau said, that only one out of a thousand is a real individual with courage and strength, nonetheless, anyone can gain access to the entire human heritage. If one is willing to rediscover what it means to be human, this brings one into the radius of the divine. One is at least on the threshold of the recognition that there are powers and principalities throughout the whole of Nature, and that so far from

being a blind and inanimate world moved mechanistically by collocations of atoms in random statistical patterns, this is indeed an intelligent universe with innumerable conscious centres of cosmic ideation and energy. If a person begins to see Nature in this way, then it is possible to recover the richness of one's divine inheritance. Man is descended from those whom Pythagoras called the Fathers of the human race, whom the Hindus called *agnishvātta pitris*, the givers of the solar light of self-consciousness to humanity. These spiritual ancestors were reverenced by the Chinese and the ancient Egyptians, just as the heroes of old were honoured by the Greeks and the Romans. The whole of the human story is a magnificent and mostly unrecorded saga replete with immense resources that are still accessible to individuals. By self-election and self-determination, each person must lay claim to the universal treasure of wisdom.

Each can regain the capability of showing expansiveness, generosity, magnanimity and gratitude and, above all, reverence, because without reverence one is less than human. Where there is reverence, there is growth. It is nurtured in the silence in which, from humble beginnings unseen below the soil, a plant may grow and in time become a tree that can take its place in secluded forests of towering sentinels. Primeval forests mirror something vastly more overwhelming in relation to the *mahātmas*, who have been compared to the sturdy limbs of a mighty banyan tree, with its roots above the firmament and its branches below on earth. The immemorial Tree of Wisdom has been known as *brahma vāch*, *bodhi dharma*, *gnosis* and by many other names. The *Vedas* depict the *rishis* and seers as of one mind, one heart, one will. They speak with one voice, the Voice of the Ancient of Days, transcending all known frontiers and concepts of human history and evolution. With the vast perspective of the accumulated wisdom of the ages, the disciple must rejoice rather than despair in the realization that he is zero. Everything depends on where the zero is placed. Zero before a number has no value. If zero is the numerator of a fraction, the value is nought; if it is the denominator, the value is infinite. If zero is put after a number, its power is significant. The sphere of authentic individuality is like a three-dimensional sphere filled with empty space which can accommodate tetrahedrons and the dodecahedron. If a human being did not have

analogous empty spaces within the brain and the chambers of the heart, there would be no room for the ākāshic fires or the *anahata* vibration of the spiritual heart.

True joy stirring in that heart is far from any frenetic attempts to convince oneself that one is enjoying oneself. When one continually needs convincing, nothing adequately convinces. *Ananda* has nothing to do with ephemeral pleasures or private self-satisfaction. True joy or *ānanda* springs up in the heart and mind like an artesian well, and though it may overflow in appropriate words and gestures, it is always greater than the power and possibility of expression. The highest joy lights a fire that can never be put out. If the level of joy reached is unstable, it may be no more than a compensatory form of consolation. It will be temporary and intermittent. It cannot mirror the *ānanda* of the *mahātmas*, whose every affirmation has the accent of transcendental truth and is verifiable through self-realization. Once deep joy is aroused, it is consistent and capable of self-maintenance. It is similar to the quiet cheerfulness of mountaineers carrying little lanterns across dark, iridescent slopes, patiently climbing steep ascents, crossing abysses and caverns whilst heedful of the great rumblings of Nature. Theirs is the peaceful joy of knowing that even if they cannot climb any further now, they could start again; that even if each is alone and without friends in a solitary spot, yet somehow something may happen and timely help may come. And if indeed it is one's lot to die then and there, death comes as a deliverer and a friend.

The worst of times is also the best of times. Joy sees beyond the chaotic city that has to go. It is not clinging but courageous, willing to greet the unknown and the uncertain, fearlessly and with maturity. It is capable of drawing the larger circle and enclosing myriads of unknown human beings, never confining itself within a small circle of confused allegiance. The ancient teaching of India declared:

> He who loves lives;
> He who loves himself lives in hell;
> He who loves another lives on earth;
> He who loves others lives in heaven; but
> He who silently adores and loves the Self of all creatures lives in that Self – and that is eternal peace.

The level of love determines the measure of joy. Joy flowing from the degree of love one is initially capable of generating acts as a stimulus to larger loves and greater joys that eventually dissolve into the cosmic dance, wherein all the elements are involved. This is enigmatic because it depends upon the mathematics of the soul and the universe, the karma of nations and the whole of humanity. The moment one reaches out beyond one's own shadow, turning towards the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world, then joy flows from the immortal soul in the realm of illimitable light. Joy lies in the inward assurance that though there is life and death, there is also Immortality, which does not participate in what is called life or what is feared as death, but is greater than all the small cycles and little circles of time and space. There is joy in the awareness that there is limitlessness in the realm of cosmic ideation, eternal duration and boundless space.

Lord Krishna represents the universality and versatility of boundless joy (*ānanda*) and the unconditional love at the core of cosmic and human evolution. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever the human heart has opened itself to the invisible Spiritual Sun, and wherever even a drop of wisdom has been awakened through suffering and pain, courage and persistence, there one will find the immortal Spirit, the sovereign power of the omnipresent *Purusha*. All the *rishis* and *mahātmas* reside within the universal form (*brahmānda*) of Vishnu-Narāyana-Krishna. In saluting them, one experiences a sense of the timeless, a transcendence that reaches beyond all limits, frontiers and boundaries of manifestation. One may greet the Supreme in the midnight sun, in the dawn of Venus, at midday or in the gathering dusk – the time of memory or the time of reverie. And one must always reach out towards that Divine Darkness which is prior to all worlds and beyond all forms. Myriads upon myriads of worlds of billions of beings arise from that Divine Darkness and reside in the unmanifest light of the invisible form of Vishnu-Nārāyana. That light neither rises nor sets, neither waxes nor wanes. It is the light to be found in the sound of the AUM, uttered, however imperfectly, by every babe at birth. It is the light that descends upon every human being at the moment of death, when he or she stands ready to cast off the external garments of this world and return to the

inmost vesture, the *karana sharira*, and come closer to the *ātman*. It is also the light-vibration of the ever-present *brahma vāch* that pulsates throughout the cosmos, maintained in motion by mighty men of meditation, *dhyanis*, *rishis*, *mahātmas*, *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas*.

The light of soul-wisdom transcends all formal properties and definable qualities, as suggested in the epistemology, ethics and science of action of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. It is difficult for a person readily to generate and release an effortless balancing of the three dynamic qualities of Nature, *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* – or to see the entire cosmos as a radiant garment of the divine Self. One needs to ponder calmly upon the subtle properties of the *gunas*, their permutations and combinations. The complex human form represents a matrix of polarities and interconnections, all of which are subordinated to the overbrooding *ātman* which is beyond all polarity or hint of heterogeneity. Just as there is a north and a south pole to the earth, there is also a north and a south pole to the body. There is also a polarity of the astral vesture and, most important, a polarity of the mind (manomaya kosha). At one level, the reflective *manas* stands as a moon towards the sun above it, whilst at another level higher *manas* stands as the sun in relation to lower *manas* or the lunar mind. Good is that which is pleasing to the Krishna-Ishvara within. In the heart of every human being there is a ray of Krishna, programming the possibilities for that soul during incarnated existence and its participation in all the three worlds. No being in any world entirely lacks the possibility of entering into the realm of light, and not a single person can wholly avoid participation in the darkness of moha (delusion), of *māyā* (illusion), and of *kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha* (desire, anger and greed). This is represented in Buddhist iconography by elaborate tańkas which display the vast array of archetypal and collective human faults surrounding samsāric existence. Early in the *Gītā*, Krishna speaks of the omnipresent obscuring power of *rajoguna*, the common enemy of humanity, which leads the best of persons to lose their firm foothold in the realm of the divine. This progenitor of evil operates upon the mind which, as a dynamic field, manifests a positive and negative polarity, together with a third intermediate factor. By placing *rajas* on one side and *tamas* on the other, with *sattva* in the middle, like the central column in the Kabbalistic tree of life, one

may picture everything below a certain plane as a continual alternation of *rajas* and *tamas*, activity and inertia. But this cannot take place without a nodal equilibrium point in between, which is called a *laya* centre, a motionless point.

Sattvic knowledge helps the mind to meditate upon the primordial ocean of pure light, the bountiful sea of milk in the old Hindu myths. The entire universe is immersed in a single sweeping cosmic process. Even though we seem to see a moving panorama of configurations, colours and forms, sequentiality is illusory. Behind all passing forms there are innumerable constellations of minute, invisible and ultimately indivisible particles, whirling and revolving in harmonic modes of eternal circular motion. A person can learn to release *anamnesis*, soul-memory, to make conscious and creative use of modes of motion governing the life-atoms that compose the variegated universe of his immortal and mortal vestures. The timeless doctrine of spiritual self-knowledge in the fourth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* suggests that human beings are not in the false position of having to choose between perfect omniscience and total nescience. Human beings participate in an immense hinterland of differentiation of the absolute light reflected within modes of motion of matter. To grow up is to grasp that one cannot merely oscillate between extremes.

Human thought too often involves the violence of false negation – leaping from one kind of situation to the exact opposite – rather than seeing life as a fertile field for indefinite growth. This philosophical perspective requires us to think fundamentally in terms of the necessary relation between the knower and the known. Differences in the modalities of the knowable are no more and no less important than divergences in the perceptions and standpoints of knowers. The universe may be seen for what it is – a constellation of self-conscious beings and also a vast array of elemental centres of energy – *devas* and *devatās* – all of which participate in a ceaseless cosmic dance that makes possible the sacrificial process of life for each and every single human being. If one learns that there are degrees within degrees of reflected light, then one sees the compelling need to gain the faculty of divine discrimination (*viveka*).

The *Gītā* is a jewelled essay in *buddhiyoga*. *Yoga* derives from a root meaning 'to unite', and centres upon the conscious union of the

individual self and the universal Self. The trinity of Nature is the lock of magic, and the trinity of Man is the sole key. Hence the grace of the *guru*. This divine union may be understood at early stages in different ways. It could be approached by a true concern for *anāsakti* – selfless action and joyous service, the precise performance of duties and a sacrificial involvement in the work of the world. It may also be attempted through the highest form of *bhakti* or devotion, in concentrating and purifying one's whole being so as to radiate an unconditional, constant and consistent truth, a pure, intense and selfless feeling of love. And it must also summon forth true knowledge through altruistic meditation. *Jñāna* and *dhyāna* do not refer to the feeble reflections of the finite and fickle mind upon the fleeting and shadowy objects of an ever-evolving world, but rather point to that enigmatic process of inward knowing wherein the knower and the known become one, fused in transcendent moments of compassionate revelation. The pungent but purifying commentary by *Dnyaneshwar* states in myriad simple metaphors the profoundest teaching of the *Gītā*. In offering numerous examples from daily life, *Dnyaneshwar* wants to dissolve the idea that anything or any being can be known through *a priori* categories that cut up the universe into watertight compartments and thereby limit and confine consciousness. The process of true learning merges disparate elements separated only because of the looking-glass view of the inverted self which mediates between the world and ourselves in a muddled manner. The clearest perception of *sattva* involves pure ideation.

The *Gītā* presents a magnificent portrait of the *yogin*, the man of meditation, who has all his senses and organs under complete control. Whatever he does, he remains seated like one unaffected and aloof (*kūtastha*). He does not identify with any of the instruments necessary for the creative transformation of the cosmic process. A human being who valiantly journeys in consciousness behind and beyond the visible process of Nature – like the ballerina in Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" who becomes Spring itself while remaining a single character in the concordant ballet – maintains a joyous and silent awareness of the whole process while coolly functioning at various levels with dexterity. All human beings, insofar as they can smoothly function at diverse levels of precise control and painless transcendence, can attain to firm

fixity of mind and serene steadfastness of spirit – the sacred marks of initiation through sattvic ideation in the secret heart. Sattvic knowledge is the invisible common thread transcending all apparent differences. The Religion of Responsibility is rooted in rita, sattvic motion in unmanifested Nature, and it makes sattvic consciousness (*dharma*) accessible to imperfect individuals. It gives support to rhythmic activity which is simultaneously precise, liberating and intrinsically self-validating, without the creeping shadow of rajasic inconstancy or the stultification of *tamas*ic rigidity.

The self of the individual who is sattvic is sacrificially integrated with the Self which surveys the whole world, with its congeries of forms and objects, whilst seeing all of these appearances in local time and visible space as evanescent parts of a continuous process of interconnected, if conceptually discrete, causes and consequences. This is like a mighty river that flows from a hidden stream issuing from a sacred source in the depths of the highest mountain ranges. *Dnyāneshwar* offers an apt analogy which applies both to *anamnesis* and to *turīyasattva*. Just as a stream becoming a river empties itself into the great ocean, so too does individual consciousness when it withdraws itself from its reflected sense of 'I-ness' within the world of insupportable illusions. When the principle of self-consciousness initiates this inner withdrawal, it quietly empties itself into the great ocean of primordial light, *daiviprakriti*, universal and self-luminous consciousness. Yet at the same time it remains active within *hiranyagarbha*, the pristine golden egg of immortal individuality, cosmic and trans-human.

The *Bhagavad Gītā* intimates that perfectibility is a meaningful ideal because it is rooted in the very ground of one's being. Krishna's teaching is echoed in the injunction of Christ: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." If every human being can summon an active faith in the possibility of perfection, then each can vitally participate in the vicissitudes of space and time, the perplexing imperfections of this world. If one can avoid consolidating through guilt-ridden *tamas*ic obsession or precipitating through the intensely rajasic and disordered buzzing of the brain, or seeking self-satisfaction through a static, sattvic equilibrium, then one may become an apprentice in the art of alchemical self-transmutation. One could

repeatedly rise above the three propensities and thereby recognize in this great teaching an assured basis for the principle of indefinite growth in the context of cool detachment and joyous renunciation. So long as the three propensities are not merely properties of matter and mind but also grounded in the very nature of intelligently differentiated reality, human beings can self-consciously seek the One in the many and then discern the many in the One. Eventually a point is reached when both perspectives may be fused. The *Bhagavad Gītā* blends three types of knowledge with the three *gunas*. In the fourteenth and seventeenth chapters the three propensities are differentiated in many contexts, including faith, charity, action, knowledge, the discriminative faculty of *buddhi*, the power of steadfastness and the potency of meditation.

In regard to discrimination of duty, Krishna offers a dialectical teaching that can, through its central logic, accommodate the vast variety of situations arising through the *gunas*. Quintessentially, it is a philosophy in which there is no intrinsic separation of the knower from the known. Anyone with a strictly conventional view of obligation is apt to be attached to results. He becomes so conditioned and conditional that he can attempt something solely in the hope of reward. This is magnified unmistakably in an effete commercial culture where one never initiates anything unless it can be weighed and measured, bought and sold. Today many people are waking up to the absurdity of the logic of the cash register when applied to human encounters. Those who perform duties in a rajasic sense have no real discrimination. They are ever agitated by the desire for results, and, therefore, can only discharge their duties by setting false values upon them. They have somehow to set apart certain acts and duties from all others. Not only are they inflexible, but they are also preoccupied with the language of comparison and contrast. They soon start comparing and contrasting, whether in self-awareness or meditation, in drug-taking or erotic activity, in stocks and shares or success measured in terms of dollars and cents. As they are constantly involved in making comparisons which are misleading, they cling to a derivative and parasitic conception of duty. They cannot generate the supreme, serene sense of obligation of the truly free man who voluntarily binds himself

by a fundamental commitment and chooses to honour it through every trial.

Alternatively, consider the person who decides to remain true to a sacred teaching and to a fundamental negation of false values. Here one may sense the strength of clear-sightedness brought over from previous lives in order to carry out a line of inward resolve. Such souls show the power of calm discrimination between essentials and non-essentials. The more tough-minded a person remains in preserving a pattern of self-chosen obligations, or as Krishna says, in doing only what is necessary – the more he is always, in every situation, ready to negate the superfluous, while concentrating on what is needed. This produces a degree of discriminative wisdom which is rather like the use and enjoyment of light. Some mystical poets compare this state to the light that radiates from a red-hot piece of glowing coal. *Tamas* would be the same coal when it is inert. When a fire is put out, there is a death of rajasic radiance, resulting in a stone-like state concealing an inner process of disintegration. Discriminative wisdom exists at many levels. Herein lies the great strength and generous hope of the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gītā*.

Every rivulet of discrimination enhances the active power of *buddhi*. Even if one merely has a few drops of the waters of devotion and humbly consecrates them at the inmost altar of Krishna, it is possible to negate in advance any attachment to consequences. Engaging in action in a sacrificial spirit, with pure joy and the willing acceptance of pain, the true devotee will certainly be delivered from a network of errors and miseries. In the progress of time he will surely experience tranquillity of thought. *Dharma* in Sanskrit has a very different connotation from any strenuous conceptions of duty, Calvinistic or Teutonic. There is instead a firm yet relaxed sense of obligation which is self-sustaining and also spontaneous. In Indian thought *dharma* is ascribed to fire, the sky, all objects in space, all phenomena in time, and the categories of selfhood. *Dharma* is that which upholds: anything which holds up a human being, anything which sustains him, anything which helps him to keep going, is rooted in his duty. If *dharma* upholds every person, anyone can regulate and refine *dharma* through buddhic discrimination. This is the sovereign talisman of every human being.

All persons inherently possess godlike faculties of imagination, creativity, freedom and serenity. All are capable of exalted conceptions of calm, and can expand their perspectives and horizons while at the same time bringing a laser-like faculty of intense concentration to every task. The Great Teachers of mankind have always reminded the multitudes of the privilege of incarnation into a human form. Many people, however, are liable to be so rajasic at the moment of death that they will soon be propelled back into incarnation in circumstances they do not like. There are also those who are so receptive in life to the summerland of ghosts, demons and disintegrating entities, pishāchas and rākshasas, that at the moment of death they are drawn into the underworld of psychic corpses. Human beings are innately divine, but there are myriad degrees of differentiation in the manifestation of divine light. The light shines in all, but in all it does not shine forth equally. By using whatever in consciousness is an authentic mirroring of supernal light in the concrete contexts of daily obligations, one's own light will grow. The rays of truth irradiate those who ardently desire to rescue the mind from the darkness of ignorance. It is critical for human beings to keep relighting themselves, to wipe out the ignorance that consolidates out of inertia and delusion in that pseudo-entity absolutized as the personal self. In the eyes of the Sages there are only rays of light accompanied by long shadows masquerading as personalities.

Krishna speaks in the sixteenth chapter of those who are born with demoniac propensities, and provides a perfect portrait of the shadowy and dying culture of *kali yuga*. He also offers a compelling picture of the graces and excellences of those who evoke memories of the Golden Age. The demoniac qualities, resulting in spiritual inertia, are the product of misuse in previous lives. Everyone who abused any power must face the consequences in the future. For three or four lives he may find his will blunted, his faculties castrated, his potencies circumcised, until he can thoroughly learn the proper use of his powers. There is a compelling passage in *The Dream of Ravan* wherein we are given a graphic analogy between states of mind and diseases. All ailments are caused in the realm of the mind; all ailments are rooted in the subtler vestures. *Sattva* corresponds to the *kārana sharīra*, the causal body, comprising the most fundamental ideas of selfhood in

relation to which one generates a sense of reality. There is a correspondence between *rajas*, the principle of chaotic desire, and the *sūkshma sharīra*, the astral form. When this is irradiated by the Light of the *Logos*, it can show a reflected radiance. In all human beings there are glimmerings of noble aspiration, the yearning to do good. This is the source of fellow-feeling, the kindness of a mother for her children, the solicitude of a doctor for a pregnant woman whose baby he is delivering. These are familiar intimations of that sattvic quality which can make a human being magnanimous, noble and free.

Demoniac inertia, on the other hand, arises through a whole way of thinking that is false. If one thinks that this world exists for enjoyment only, that human beings are merely the ephemeral accidental product of the pleasure of a man and a woman, that everyone is in competition for wealth and fame and status, and if one ceaselessly caters to all such absurdities and stupidities, one develops an āsuric nature. Anyone who really wants to rise above this condition could do no better than to ponder upon the account in the seventeenth chapter of the *Bhagavad Gītā* of the philosophical nature of the three propensities, and the portraits given in the sixteenth chapter of the demoniac personality as well as the godlike being. A sensible person who wishes to travel on the road to true discipleship will find that simply by studying these chapters calmly, he could see clearly the convergence of attitudes and qualities which strengthen the demoniac or godlike nature in man. Instead of indulging in self-pity and self-contempt, the sincere seeker of Wisdom will allow his whole nature to become absorbed in contemplation on the godlike qualities.

The whole of the *Bhagavad Gītā* is replete with magnificent portraits of Sages. The magic of meditation is such that by merely focussing upon them, they can release a light-energy which streams downward, freeing a person from the bondage of self-created illusions and self-destructive acts. Rid of the specious notion that he is somebody special, he can freely accept his cosmic potential as a point in space and joyously deliver himself with the dignity of man *qua* man. It is only when he is ready that Krishna confers upon Arjuna the exalted title of Nara (man), an individual ray of Divine Light. When a person can truly witness the divine in every human being, he can also see that every time anyone torments himself, he tortures Krishna. No one has

such a right. One's parents did not give a body simply for the sake of crucifying the Christos-Krishna within through self-indulgence or false asceticism. One has to free oneself from all obsessive identification with the shadow and salute the empyrean with the cool assurance of one who does not fear the light, one who is not threatened by the fact that other human beings exist, and one whose stance is firmly rooted in the Divine Ground that transcends the *gunas* and the playful polarities of *Purusha* and *prakriti*.

Every pilgrim soul who seeks to increase skill in action for the sake of increasing his or her capacity to add even a little to the sum of human good can benefit from the Teachings of Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Taken as a whole, the *Gītā* is a treatise on *yoga*, the kingly science of the individual soul's union with the universal Self. That union is, ontologically, ever existent. But owing to the *māyā* of manifestation and the descent of consciousness through vestures which seem to create a world of many selves and many forms, the human mind becomes alienated from the true inmost Self in which Ishvara resides. It becomes confined within time and space, within past, present and future, and it must struggle to overcome these illusions. Thus the *Gītā* is a summons and challenge to engage in that righteous warfare which every human soul must undertake. In the eighteenth chapter of the *Gītā*, Lord Krishna declares that if one will not voluntarily choose to engage in this righteous war, karmic necessity will compel one to do so. The wise are those who cooperate with cosmic necessity, with their own divine destiny, with their own sacrosanct duty or *svadharma*. The wisest are those who choose as firmly and as early as possible, making an irreversible and unconditional commitment, in the gracious manner and generous spirit of Lord Krishna. Without doubt or hesitation, they choose His path, His teaching and His prescribed mode of skill in action, rooted in *buddhiyoga*.

In the second chapter of the *Gītā*, Krishna begins by affirming to Arjuna the eternal existence of one indivisible, inconsumable, inexhaustible source of all life, light and energy. Having dispelled the danger that Arjuna would abandon through fear the righteous battle and his *svadharma*, Krishna presents before Arjuna the talismanic teaching of *buddhiyoga*:

> Verily, action is far inferior to the discipline of wisdom (*buddhiyoga*), O Dhanaṅjaya. In wisdom seek thou shelter. Pitiable are they whose motive is the fruit of works.
>
> He who is yoked to wisdom (buddhiyukta) lets go both what is well done and what is ill done. Therefore, yearn for *yoga*. *Yoga* is skill in the performance of action.
>
> Sages yoked to wisdom (*buddhi*) renounce the fruits of action, and thus freed from the bondage of births, attain to the state of stainless bliss. (II.49-51)

Buddhiyoga requires a fixity and steadfastness in intuitive intelligent determination which is superior to *karmayoga*, the *yoga* of works, as a means of gaining enlightenment. It involves an eye capable of recognizing essentials, which, once awakened, will give a decisiveness without wavering or wandering. Through this resolute intellect, one's actions may become shadowless – *nishchāya*. Even though one may be obscured, as a member of the human family participating in the world's pain, ignorance and turbulence, nonetheless one inwardly preserves the dignity of the power of choice. It is, therefore, possible to touch within oneself that level of absolute resolve which ensures that something essential will never be abandoned, diluted or doubted, never weakened by careless speech nor lost in the chaos of compulsive acts, but always protected from discursive and dissecting reasoning. Every human being enjoys such moments of assurance. Otherwise it would not be possible to survive. Even fools and knaves have a few moments of *sushupti* at night, inspiring them to awaken in the morning to greet another day. Were it not for this abiding sense of assurance about this minimum dignity within the core of one's being, one could not go on.

This sense of one's distinct place in the total scheme of things is what Spinoza called the *conatus*, the urge or will to sustain rational and spiritual self-preservation. This is not merely an intellectual notion, but a biological fact. When a person begins to approach death, the *anāhata* vibration in the spiritual heart ceases to sound in the *linga sharīra* – the subtle astral vesture. The Sage or Seer can recognize this cessation of sound and a subtle alteration in the rate of breathing several months before the time of physical death. Throughout this period, the human

being is engaged in a protracted review of the whole of his or her life, a review which is too often chaotic and confused, a jumble of recent memories and childhood events. Only at the time of separation from the physical body is the soul enabled to view in an orderly and rapid manner the complete film of an entire life. In the final preparation for this there is an ebbing of the connection between the sound vibration in the spiritual heart and the *karana sharīra* – the causal body and the vibration in the *linga sharīra*, and therefore also in the *sthūla sharīra*, or physical body. Once this ebbing begins, the person has begun to withdraw or die.

The sense of resolve and human dignity – and hence also the connections between the vestures is so weak in human beings today that vast numbers, in the phrase of T.S. Eliot, are only "living and partly living". They have become so disgusted with the world, so confused about the events of our times and the precipitous decline of humane values throughout the globe, that they are hardly incarnated. They are mostly asleep or sleep-walking, drowsy or passive, or they mechanically go about their duties. They maintain little of that minimal wakefulness that is found in many a humble villager who, through desperation and poverty, maintains intact the light in the eyes, the light of *manas* and human self-awareness. Paradoxically, one can sometimes sense the ray and radiance of pure consciousness in the most desperate and despised of human beings, whilst others have, alas, been educated beyond their capacity to make use of their knowledge. Between the head and the heart there is a terrible chasm, or even a battle. Many tend to be lost and therefore they live and partly live. It is as if the will to live, the *conatus*, has weakened; nothing remains but an automatism of habit and the power of cohesion in the *skandhas*. This is the pitiable condition referred to by Lord Krishna when he speaks of those who are wedded to the fruits of action. The plight of those who have conditioned themselves only to act for the sake of results is an indictment of modern education in *kali yuga*. The Iron Age arms too many people to live only in terms of what is perceptible, measurable and tangible. Having reduced all to the terms of a utilitarian consciousness, they come to view their fellow human beings in a crude Lockean fashion: "Every human being is a threat to you, unless you can join interests with him." If a person is neither a

threat nor an accomplice in some selfish interest, he is a stranger. Today vast numbers of human beings live in cities of strangers. They live alone amidst humanity, unloved and unloving, with no sense of warmth. Such is the tragic condition of 'modern man'.

Over five thousand years ago Lord Krishna anticipated this condition of *varnasaṅkara*, the confusion of castes. Although it will increase and proceed throughout the entirety of *kali yuga*, it will also provide an opportunity for those who engage consciously and voluntarily in the discipline of intuitive determination, *buddhiyoga*. Human beings who are yoked to *buddhi* are lifelong exemplars of *buddhiyoga*. Preferably before the age of seven, and in rare cases even before the age of three, they have permanently married themselves to the Light of the *Logos* within the secret spiritual heart. Having so early betrothed themselves and permanently married themselves to the Lord within, they go through the obligations of life with ease, without much expectation, but with a certain lightness and skilfulness in the performance of duty. They do what is needed for their parents and grandparents. They do not despise those who claim to be their rivals or enemies. They do not become too attached to their own siblings, and see themselves as essentially no different from the other children they encounter from poorer families and humbler circumstances, or even from affluent and afflicted families. All of them they recognize as a part of one sacred family.

Between the ages of seven and fourteen, having already secretly betrothed themselves to this inner core of the *Ishvara* within, they become quite ready to engage in the duties of the *grihastha āshrama*. At the same time, they have cultivated that skill in self-education which will last all through the *grihastha āshrama* and take them into the retreats of the third *āshrama*. Even if they cannot retreat into the solitude of forests, mountains or caves, but remain in the midst of society, they will be like wanderers or *parivrājakas*, preparing themselves for the fourth *āshrama*, that of the homeless wanderer. They will always be one step ahead of the stages of life. By the age of twenty-one they will have sharpened their powers of reason and by the age of twenty-eight they will have developed sufficient buddhic insight to be able to synthesize and select. So they are able to let go of

what is irrelevant and inessential. They can follow the teaching of Buddha: O bhikshu, lighten the boat if you will cross to the other shore. While others who are less wise are engaged in amassing and accumulating, they learn to lighten their claims upon the world and their demands upon others. By lightening their expectations from institutions, their hopes and fantasies in relation either to the opposite sex or in relation to children or parents, they become capable of looking with eyes of wonder each day for what is unexpected. They begin to perceive the unwritten poetry of human life and the silent drama of human existence. Thus they become witnesses to the divine dialectic ceaselessly at work.

Such souls are fortunate, for they have chosen to become yoked to *buddhi*. Having established true continuity of consciousness in youth, by the age of thirty-five they have already started withdrawing. At the moment of death, whether it come early or late, they are able to engage in a conscious process of withdrawal, maintaining intact the potency of the AUM. In life they have not merely learnt to meditate upon the AUM, but also to enact it. They have learnt the art of will-prayer and gained the ability to act in any and every situation for the good of others, without expectation of reward. They have learnt to cast their actions, like offerings, into the ocean of universal sacrifice in the spirit of the AUM. Thus they are able to experience the AUM, whether in the silence that precedes the dawn or in the noisy rush and din of cities. Even in the cacophony and cries of human pain they hear the AUM. It cries out to them in all of Nature's voices. So they maintain continually an awareness of the AUM, and well before the moment of death they are able to receive the help that will enable them to follow a life of *svadharma* and *buddhiyoga* in their future incarnations.

Having given Arjuna preliminary instruction in *buddhiyoga* in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, Krishna conveys in the fourth chapter the correct mental posture of the disciple. He depicts that divine *bhakti* which is the prerequisite for *jñāna* and also the true spirit of *karmayoga*, because they all fuse into a sacred current of consciousness.

> Seek for wisdom with obeisance, by questioning, and through service; the wise who see the Truth will instruct thee in the way of wisdom.

> Knowing which, thou shalt not again fall into delusion, O son of Pandu; and in this way, thou shalt see all beings unreservedly in the Self, and thus in Me.
>
> (IV.34-35)

In this depiction of the perfect posture of the *chela*, Krishna stresses the humility of the wise and the silence of the strong, virtues of the Sage whose portrait was given in the second chapter of the *Gītā*. Having conveyed this ideal posture, Krishna proceeds in the seventh chapter to present *buddhi* as an element in cosmic manifestation. Here he goes beyond the teachings of the *Sāṅkhya* School, which holds that *buddhi* is a kind of radiant matter or substance present throughout all Nature. Krishna affirms *buddhi* as wisdom itself and inseparable from himself, something that no human being can develop except by the grace of the Lord.

> I am the sweet fragrance of the earth, the luminous glow of fire, the vitality in all beings, and I am the fervour of austerity in ascetics.
>
> Know Me as the eternal seed of all beings, O son of Prithā. I am the wisdom (*buddhi*) of the wise and the radiance (*tejas*) of the radiant.
>
> (VII.9-10)

To understand this a human being must be able to insert himself or herself into the whole of humanity, recognizing that there is a cosmic force working in human evolution. This is *mahābuddhi*, connected with *mahat* and *ākāsha*, the alkahest of the hierophants and magicians. It is the universal solvent and the elixir of life. It is the basis of self-conscious immortality and self-conscious transmutation of the *linga sharīra* and the *sthūla sharīra*. It is the Light of the *Logos*. All expressions of intelligence, whether latent, partial or highly specialized, whether precise, diffused or merely potential, whether in a dog or an Adept, are drops in one universal shoreless ocean of cosmic *buddhi*. Therefore, no human being can develop *buddhiyoga* on the basis of individualistic conceptions of progress. One cannot simply say to oneself that because one has seen through one's illusions, one is now going to become an apprentice in *buddhiyoga*. To say that is to misapprehend the nature of

the quest. All forms of *yoga* require, at some level, what M. K. Gandhi called *anāsakti*, egolessness; this is supremely true in *buddhiyoga*.

If *buddhiyoga* is likened to the practice of spiritual archery, then one must forget oneself in order to hit the mark. One can do this meaningfully only if, at the same time, one remains spiritually awake. One must become intensely conscious of one's kinship with all of creation, capable of enjoying its beauty and intelligence without any sense of 'mine' or 'thine'. Wherever there is a display of wisdom, one must salute it. Wherever one finds an exhibition of true and helpful common sense in the speech of any human being, one must acknowledge and greet it. At night, before falling asleep, one must count all the benefactors and teachers that one met during the day. No matter how they are disguised, you must be so taken up in rejoicing that you have learnt from other human beings that you have no time to complain of injustice or to become discontented, let alone contentious and cantankerous. Long after the Mahābhārata War had ended, Krishna told Arjuna that every time one speaks unnecessarily or falsely, one's astral shadow lengthens. If one speaks unwisely, harshly or without thought and deliberation, one expands and fattens the *linga sharīra*. So one creates a smoky obscuration of the power of tejas, the light within the spiritual heart. The true *yogin* does the opposite, becoming very conscious and deliberate in the exercise of mental and therefore uttered speech. He learns the art of what D. K. Māvalankar calls self-attenuation. Through this stripping away of inessentials, one becomes capable of maximizing one's every use of life-energy.

Paradoxically, one cannot acquire this self-mastery without recognizing that one cannot do it on one's own. Therefore, Krishna teaches that the power of universal *buddhi* is an omnipresent essence. Krishna is the radiance in all that is radiant and the intelligence in all the intelligences in the universe. Thus it is only by Krishna's gift that one can arouse that power of devotion which brings the disciple to him. This ultimate paradox, which can be understood in relation to music and love, is vital to spiritual life. It is not only that one must strive and try; a moment comes when one is so absorbed in the object of the quest that one feels the magnetic attraction of that which one seeks. Therefore, the more one enjoys being drawn towards the Lord, the more one can recognize and receive His gift of *buddhiyoga*. To

prepare oneself to use the gift of the Lord, one must, as the second chapter of the *Gītā* teaches, become a spiritual archer, skilled in the art of action. One must become perfected in the precise performance of one's self-chosen duty or *svadharma*. Initially, when Krishna uses the term *svadharma* in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, he uses it in relation to the duties of birth, of calling and of caste. He chides Arjuna for forsaking the *svadharma* of a Kshatriya. He suggests that if one does not fulfil one's own obligations, chosen and accepted over lifetimes, and if one does not come to terms with the limits, possibilities and opportunities of one's birth, one is moving in the wrong direction and will accrue much evil. Even this initial definition of *svadharma* in terms of one's starting-point in life is much more than a reference to mere occupation and caste.

In the early years of life, most human beings have so little meaningful choice with regard to circumstances that it is difficult to talk credibly of freedom at an early age. Nonetheless, there is for every human being a clear opportunity to accept or not accept that which one cannot alter. In that context, one may be said to choose one's *svadharma*. The concept of choosing that which one cannot change is not fatalism. Rather, it is a critical assessment in consciousness of those elements in one's life which are innate. In the very act of understanding and in the attempt to give meaning to these initial parameters, one must develop and apply some understanding of the karmic field. Moreover, by understanding the karmic tendencies in one's own constitution and confronting one's likes and dislikes, one may come to sense something about one's lower nature and gain some understanding of one's possible behaviour in other lives. Thus, one will recognize that in one's family, for all its obvious limitations, there may be many opportunities for enjoyment and for learning. All true soul-education is an unfoldment through worship and affection, and it is open to every human being to make all life a celebration of learning.

If one really wishes, through the power of worship coupled with affection, to become skilled in the performance of duties, one must recognize that there are those who have gone beyond the initial stages of *buddhiyoga*. They have become constant in the power of *jñānayoga*, men and women of ceaseless meditation and contemplation. They are the *buddhas* and *bodhisattvas* of ceaseless and sacrificial contemplation,

constantly ideating and thereby sustaining the possibility of human aspiration. They are able to do this through their conscious choice of mental solitude and their freedom from attraction and repulsion. Above all, they exemplify perfection in mental devotion. They have become supremely steadfast, like the immovable Himalayas. They are rock-like in their strength of *tapas*, *bhakti* and *dhyāna*. Krishna repeatedly gives encouragement to all beginners taking their first tentative steps on the path by urging them to discern in themselves something in common with the highest beings who have ever existed. He offers to Arjuna a living portrait, in potent words, of the true Sage. Whilst it is difficult for modern man to understand, there are in fact many more Sages, *munis* and *yogins* than guessed by human beings incarnated on earth. Whilst there are billions upon billions of human beings, there are also galaxies of adepts and *bodhisattvas*. Whilst they are invisible to the physical senses, they nonetheless exist and they all have their roles in the task of cosmic and human evolution.

To become capable of recognizing them and saluting them means that it is possible to gain some light with regard to one's own *svadharma*. Hence, Krishna affirms that it is even better to die in one's own *svadharma* than to be concerned with the duty of another. Even if little is going to change significantly in one's life, the acquisition of wisdom always remains possible and worthwhile. It is a useful mental exercise just to imagine that one is going to die in exactly one's present situation. Then, without giving any room to fantasy and expectation, one must understand how, through this acceptance of immediate *svadharma*, one may strengthen the power of mental devotion or *buddhiyoga*. Growth in the power of sacrifice or *jñānayajña* is always possible in every circumstance. But that growth requires a turning away from the region of separative consciousness towards the realm of the united hosts of perfected performers of *yoga* who reside within the universal form of Krishna.

To begin to apprehend this is to begin to prepare for the opening of the Wisdom-Eye, a process that is beatified by the realization of the universal vision given to Arjuna by Krishna in the eleventh chapter of the *Gītā*. Just before this vision, Krishna makes that enigmatic statement which is the foundation of all self-conscious transcendence: "Upholding this entire universe with a single fragment of Myself, I still

stand apart." (X.42) Here Krishna is the paradigm of the Pythagorean spectator, the *kūtastha*, he who is aloof and apart from all manifestation. He is the fount of those great *dhyānis* who descend in the dawn of manifestation, knowing its limits and uninvolved while performing their tasks in manifestation. Maintaining their continuity of consciousness and self-transcendence in the *Logos*, they remain free from the hypnotic spell of *mahāmāyā*. What is exemplified by *dhyānis* in the dawn of manifestation is repeatedly re-enacted in the course of human evolution when human beings, by the power of vairāgya – true dispassion established by the power of a vow of fixed determination – are able to generate a continuous current of buddhic insight. Establishing and maintaining this current, testing it in action and correcting themselves by it, individuals may become constant witnesses to the truth. After a while, their minds become so firmly yoked to buddhic discrimination that it becomes as natural as breathing. In many Buddhist schools and sanctuaries, particularly in the Hinayāna tradition, neophytes are taught to observe their breathing. When coupled with the Mahayāna refinement of motive, this can serve as the enduring basis of bare mindfulness and pure attention.

Vinoba Bhāve sums up the whole teaching of *svadharma* in the *Gītā* in terms of the concept of *chittashuddhi*, purity of consciousness. All human beings, even in *kali yuga*, and even surrounded by pollutions, are capable of mental purification. All are capable of maintaining unbroken and intact a stream of pure consciousness, but this requires spiritual food. One must learn to devise one's own rituals and sacrifices, to treat one's body as a temple in which one will greet and bathe in the Light of the *Logos*. One must learn to consecrate one's own vesture, becoming wholehearted, uncalculating and without expectation in one's relationship with Krishna. When through self-consecration *bhakti* and *buddhi* come together, *jñāna* is released. From *jñāna* one may eventually rise to *dhyāna*, ceaseless contemplation. Then it is possible to return to *svadharma* and understand it in the salvific sense expressed by Krishna in the eighteenth chapter of the *Gītā*. There Krishna puts *svadharma* in terms of a universal formula, independent of birth, early circumstances, vocation and calling. It is the art of

discovering one's unmanifest nature, and therefore becoming creative in one's capacity for self-expression and manifestation.

Each human being is an original, and each act is unique. Out of enjoyment of the cosmic *lila* and out of veneration for the universal form and omnipresent light of Krishna, a human being can become unrestricted and spontaneous in enacting and delivering *svadharma*. There is a great joy in this, and such *ānanda* is so all-absorbing that there is no time to interfere with other people or to criticize them. There is no distraction in relation to the demands of *dharma*. Instead, there is full concentration on becoming a servant and instrument of the universal *Logos* in the cosmos, the God in man, Krishna in the heart.

> Mentally renouncing all actions in Me, intent on Me, resorting to *buddhiyoga*, be constantly fixed in consciousness upon Me.
>
> With consciousness fixed in Me, thou shalt overcome all obstacles by My grace. But if, from egotism, thou wilt not listen, then thou shalt perish.
>
> If, indulging in egotism, thou thinkest, "I will not fight", this resolve of thine will be in vain, for Nature will compel thee.
>
> Bound by thine own obligations, born of thine own nature, O Kaunteya, that which from delusion thou dost not desire to do, even that thou wilt do against thy will.
>
> The Lord of all beings dwelleth in the heart, O Arjuna, causing all creatures to revolve, as if mounted upon a wheel, by the power of *māyā*.
>
> Seek refuge in Him alone with thy whole being, O son of Bharata. By His grace thou shalt obtain supreme peace, the eternal abode. (XVIII.57-62)

To become a true votary of *buddhiyoga* through the performance of *svadharma* is to become ready to serve the divine will of the *ātman*, the workings of the *Logos* and the *Avatar* behind all the turbulent sifting and chaos of the historical process. The *buddhi yogin* recognizes the intimations of the divine dialectic in maturing human beings, mellowing minds and hearts, broadening and expanding their quintessential humanity. Cooperating with the Light of the *Logos*

within, they are able to rediscover the germ of purity of consciousness and thereby enter the family of the wise, the fraternity who know all of this and exemplify it ceaselessly. The true hallmark of these *rishis* and *mahātmas* is the power of devotion and adoration. They are constant in adoration of Krishna, His *lila*, His wisdom, the joy of His dance, the beauty of His unconditionality. They understand from within themselves the way in which Krishna may be seen in Arjuna, in Arjuna's aspiration to reach up to Krishna, and also in Krishna's enjoyment of the seeming separation of himself from himself in Arjuna. This is the mysterious art of the universal diffusion of the one Light, the problem of the One and the many, and the participation of the many in the One. Through *buddhiyoga*, *bhakti* and *svadharma* there can be a self-conscious return to the One, but only on behalf of the many. This is the sacred teaching of Lord Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gītā*, given to sustain humanity throughout *kali yuga*. All may benefit from the teaching, returning to it again and again, using it in myriad ways, enjoying and appreciating its beauty. Those who are perceptive and appreciate this great gift will make resolute vows to be steadfast in maintaining unbroken a sacred relationship with the teaching and the *ishtaguru*.

Raghavan Iyer
Concord House, November 1985

END OF GITA YOGA

THEOSOPHICAL GLOSSARY

A

Absoluteness. When predicated of the UNIVERSAL PRINCIPLE, it denotes an abstract noun, which is more correct and logical than to apply the adjective "absolute" to that which has neither attributes nor limitations, nor can IT have any.

Adam (Heb.). In the *Kabalah* Adam is the "only-begotten", and means also "red earth". (See "Adam-Adami" in the *S.D.* II p. 452.) It is almost identical with *Athamas* or *Thomas*, and is rendered into Greek by *Didumos*, the "twin"– Adam, "the first", in chap. 1 of *Genesis,* being shown, "male-female."

Adam Kadmon *(Heb*). Archetypal Man; Humanity. The "Heavenly Man" not fallen into sin; Kabalists refer it to the Ten Sephiroth on the plane of human perception. [w.w.w.]

In the *Kabalah* Adam Kadmon is the manifested *Logos* corresponding to our *Third Logos*; the Unmanifested being the first paradigmic ideal Man, and symbolizing the Universe in *abscondito*, or in its "privation" in the Aristotelean sense. The First *Logos* is the "Light of the World", the Second and the Third – its gradually deepening shadows.

Adept (*Lat.*). *Adeptus*, "He who has obtained." In Occultism one who has reached the stage of Initiation, and become a Master in the science of Esoteric philosophy.

Âditi (*Sk.*). The Vedic name for the *Mûlaprakriti* of the Vedantists; the abstract aspect of Parabrahman, though both unmanifested and unknowable. In the *Vedas* Âditi is the "Mother-Goddess", her terrestrial symbol being infinite and shoreless space.

Adwaita (*Sk.*). A Vedânta sect. The non-dualistic (A-dwaita) school of Vedântic philosophy founded by Sankarâchârya, the greatest of the historical Brahmin sages. The two other schools are the Dwaita (dualistic) and the Visishtadwaita; all the three call themselves Vedântic.

Adwaitin (*Sk.*). A follower of the said school.

Æther (*Gr.*). With the ancients the divine luminiferous substance which pervades the whole universe, the "garment" of the Supreme Deity, Zeus, or Jupiter. With the moderns, Ether, for the meaning of which in physics and chemistry see Webster's *Dictionary* or any other. In esotericism Æther is the third principle of the Kosmic Septenary; the Earth being the lowest, then the Astral light, Ether and *Âkâsa* (phonetically *Âkâsha*) the highest.

Agathodæmon (*Gr.*). The beneficent, good Spirit as contrasted with the bad one, Kakodæmon. The "Brazen Serpent" of the Bible is the former; the flying serpents of fire are an aspect of Kakodæmon. The Ophites called Agathodæmon the *Logos* and Divine Wisdom, which in the Bacchanalian Mysteries was represented by a serpent erect on a pole.

Agathon (*Gr.*). Plato's Supreme Deity. Lit., "The Good", our ALAYA, or "Universal Soul".

Agni (*Sk.*). The God of Fire in the Veda; the oldest and the most revered of Gods in India. He is one of the three great deities: Agni, Vâyu and Sûrya, and also all the three, as he is the triple aspect of fire; in heaven as the Sun; in the atmosphere or air (Vâyu), as Lightning; on. earth, as ordinary Fire. Agni belonged to the earlier Vedic *Trimûrti* before Vishnu was given a place of honour and before Brahmâ and Siva were invented.

Agnishwattas (*Sk.*). A class of Pitris, the creators of the first ethereal race of men. Our solar ancestors as contrasted with the *Barhishads,* the "lunar" Pitris or ancestors, though otherwise explained in the *Purânas.*

Aham (*Sk.*). "I" – the basis of *Ahankâra*, Self-hood.

Ahankâra (*Sk.*). The conception of "I", Self-consciousness or Self-identity; the "I", the egotistical and *mâyâvic* principle in man, due to our ignorance which separates our "I" from the Universal ONE-SELF Personality, Egoism.

Ain Soph (*Heb.*). The "Boundless" or Limitless; Deity emanating and extending. [w.w.w.]

Ain Soph is also written *En Soph* and *Ain Suph*, no one, not even Rabbis, being sure of their vowels. In the religious metaphysics of the old Hebrew philosophers, the ONE Principle was an abstraction, like Parabrahmam, though modern Kabbalists have succeeded now, by dint of mere sophistry and paradoxes, in making a "Supreme God" of it and nothing higher. But with the early Chaldean Kabbalists Ain Soph is "without form or being", having "no likeness with anything else" (Franck, *Die Kabbala,* p. 126). That

Ain Soph has never been considered as the "Creator" is proved by even such an orthodox Jew as Philo calling the "Creator" the *Logos*, who stands next the "Limitless One", and the "Second God". "The Second God is its (Ain Soph's) wisdom", says Philo *(Quaest. et Solut.*). Deity is NO-THING; it is nameless, and therefore called Ain Soph; the word *Ain* meaning NOTHING. (See Franck's *Kabbala*, p. 153 ff.)

Aitareya (*Sk.*). The name of an Aranyaka (Brâhmana) and a *Upanishad* of the *Rig Veda.* Some of its portions are purely Vedântic.

Akâsa (*Sk.*). The subtle, supersensuous spiritual essence which pervades all space; the primordial substance erroneously identified with Ether. But it is to Ether what Spirit is to Matter, or *Âtmâ* to *Kâma-rûpa.* It is, in fact, the Universal Space in which lies inherent the eternal Ideation of the Universe in its ever-changing aspects on the planes of matter and objectivity, and from which radiates the *First Logos*, or expressed thought. This is why it is stated in the *Purânas* that Âkâsa has but one attribute, namely sound, for sound is but the translated symbol of *Logos* – "Speech" in its mystic sense. In the same sacrifice (*the Jyotishtoma Agnishtoma*) it is called the "God Âkâsa". In these sacrificial mysteries Âkâsa is the all-directing ‘and omnipotent Deva who plays the part of Sadasya, the superintendent over the magical effects of the religious performance, and it had its own appointed Hotri (priest) in days of old, who took its name. The Âkâsa is the indispensable agent of every *Krityâ* (magical performance) religious or profane. The expression "to stir up the Brahmâ", means to stir up the power which lies latent at the bottom of every magical operation, Vedic sacrifices being in fact nothing if not ceremonial magic. This power is the Âkâsa – in another aspect, *Kundalini* – occult electricity, the alkahest of the alchemists in one sense, or the universal solvent, the same *anima mundi* on the higher plane as the *astral light* is on the lower. "At the moment of the sacrifice the priest becomes imbued with the spirit of Brahmâ, is, for the time being, Brahmâ himself". (*Isis Unveiled*).

A*laya* (*Sk.*). The Universal Soul (See *Secret Doctrine* Vol. I. pp. 47 *et seq.*). The name belongs to the Tibetan system of the contemplative *Mahâyâna* School. Identical with *Âkâsa* in its mystic sense, and with *Mulâprâkriti,* in its essence, as it is the basis or root of all things.

Amânasa (*Sk.*). The "Mindless", the early races of this planet; also certain Hindu gods.

Ambhâmsi *(Sk.*). A name of the chief of the Kumâras Sanat-Sujâta, signifying the "waters". This epithet will become more comprehensible when we remember that the later type of Sanat-Sujâta was Michael, the Archangel, who is called in the Talmud "the Prince of *Waters*", and in the Roman Catholic Church is regarded as the patron of gulfs and promontories. Sanat-Sujâta is the immaculate son of the immaculate mother (Ambâ or Aditi, chaos and space) or the "waters" of limitless space. (See *Secret Doctrine-*, Vol. I., p. 460.)

Androgyne Ray (*Esot.*). The first differentiated ray; the Second *Logos*; Adam Kadmon in the *Kabalah;* the "male and female created he them", of the first chapter of *Genesis.*

Anima Mundi (*Lat.*). The"Soul of the World", the same as the *Alaya* of the Northern Buddhists; the divine essence which permeates, animates and informs all, from the smallest atom of matter to man and god. It is in a sense the "seven-skinned mother" of the stanzas in *The Secret Doctrine*, the essence of seven planes of sentience, consciousness and differentiation, moral and physical. In its highest aspect it is *Nirvâna*, in its lowest Astral Light. It was feminine with the Gnostics, the early Christians and the Nazarenes; bisexual with other sects, who considered it only in its four lower planes. Of igneous, ethereal nature in the objective world of form (and then ether), and divine and spiritual in its three higher planes. When it is said that every human soul was born by detaching itself from the *Anima Mundi*, it means, esoterically, that our higher Egos are of an essence identical with **It,** which is a radiation of the ever unknown Universal ABSOLUTE.

Annamaya Kosha (*Sk.*). A Vedantic term. The same as *Sthûla Sharîra* or the physical body. It is the first "sheath" of the *five* sheaths accepted by the Vedantins, a sheath being the same as that which is called "principle" in Theosophy.

Anoia (*Gr.*). "Want of understanding", "folly". *Anoia* is the name given by Plato and others to the lower *Manas* when too closely allied with Kâma, which is irrational (*agnoia*). The Greek word agnoia is evidently a derivation from and cognate to the Sanskrit word *ajnâna* (phonetically, *agnyana*) or ignorance, irrationality, absence of knowledge. (See "Agnoia" and "Agnostic".)

Antahkarana (*Sk.*)., or Antaskarana. The term has various meanings, which differ with every school of philosophy and sect. Thus

Sankârachârya renders the word as "understanding"; others, as "the internal instrument, the Soul, formed by the thinking principle and egoism"; whereas the Occultists explain it as the *path* or bridge between the Higher and the Lower *Manas*, the divine *Ego*, and the *personal* Soul of man. It serves as a medium of communication between the two, and conveys from the Lower to the Higher Ego all those personal impressions and thoughts of men which can, by their nature, be assimilated and stored by the undying Entity, and be thus made immortal with it, these being the only elements of the evanescent *Personality* that survive death and time. It thus stands to reason that only that which is noble, spiritual and divine in man can testify in Eternity to his having lived.

Anthropomorphism (*Gr.*). From "anthropos" meaning man. The act of endowing god or gods with a human form and human attributes or qualities.

Anugîtâ (*Sk.*). One of the *Upanishads.* A very occult treatise. *(See The sacred Books of the East.*)

Anupâdaka (*Sk.*). Anupapâdaka, also Aupapâduka; means parentless", "self-existing", born without any parents or progenitors. A term applied to certain self-created gods, and the Dhyâni Buddhas.

Arjuna (*Sk.*) Lit., the "white". The third of the five Brothers Pandu or the reputed Sons of Indra (esoterically the same as Orpheus). A disciple of Krishna, who visited him and married Su-bhadrâ, his sister, besides many other wives, according to the allegory. During the fratricidal war between the *Kauravas* and the *Pândavas,* Krishna instructed him in the highest philosophy, while serving as his charioteer. *(See Bhagavad Gîtâ.*)

Arûpa (*Sk.*). "Bodiless", formless, as opposed to *rûpa*, "body", or form.

Arvâksrotas (*Sk.*). The *seventh* creation, that of man, in the *Vishnu Purâna.*

Âryasangha (*Sk.*) The Founder of the *first* Yogâchârya School. This Arhat, a direct disciple of Gautama, the Buddha, is most unaccountably mixed up and confounded with a personage of the same name, who is said to have lived in Ayôdhya (Oude) about the fifth or sixth century of our era, and taught Tântrika worship in addition to the Yogâchârya system. Those who sought to make it popular, claimed that he was the same Âryasangha, that had been a follower of Sâkyamuni, and that he was 1,000 years old. Internal evidence alone is sufficient to show that the works written by him and translated about the year 600 of our era, works full of Tantra worship,

ritualism, and tenets followed now considerably by the "red-cap" sects in Sikhim, Bhutan, and Little Tibet, cannot be the same as the lofty system of the early Yogâcharya school of pure *Buddhi*sm, which is neither northern nor southern, but absolutely esoteric. Though none of the genunine Yogâchârya books (the *Narjol chodpa*) have ever been made public or marketable, yet one finds in the *Yogâchârya Bhûmi Shâstra* of the *pseudo*-Âryasangha a great deal from the older system, into the tenets of which he may have been initiated. It is, however, so mixed up with Sivaism and Tantrika magic and superstitions, that the work defeats its own end, notwithstanding its remarkable dialectical subtilty. (See the *Theosophical Glossary*)

Asakrit Samâdhi (Sk.). A certain degree of ecstatic contemplation. A stage in *Samâdhi.*

Âsana *(Sk.*). The third stage of *Hatha Yoga*, one of the prescribed postures of meditation.

Ashta Siddhis (*Sk.*). The eight consummations in the practice of Hatha *Yoga*.

Astral Body, or Astral "Double". The ethereal counterpart or shadow of man or animal. The ***Linga Sharira,*** the "Doppelgäinger". The reader must not confuse it with the ASTRAL SOUL, another name for the lower *Manas*, or Kama-*Manas* so-called, the reflection of the HIGHER EGO.

Astral Light (*Occult*) The invisible region that surrounds our globe, as it does every other, and corresponding as the second Principle of Kosmos (the third being Life, of which it is the vehicle) to the *Linga Sharira* or the Astral Double in man. A subtle Essence visible only to a clairvoyant eye, and the lowest but one (*viz.*, the earth), of the Seven Akâsic or Kosmic Principles. Eliphas Levi calls it the great Serpent and the Dragon from which radiates on Humanity every evil influence. This is so; but why not add that the Astral Light gives out nothing but what it has received; that it is the great terrestrial crucible, in which the vile emanations of the earth (moral and physical) upon which the Astral Light is fed, are all converted into their subtlest essence, and radiated back intensified, thus becoming epidemics – moral, psychic and physical. Finally, the Astral Light is the same as the *Sidereal Light* of Paracelsus and other Hermetic philosophers. "Physically, it is the ether of modern science. Metaphysically, and in its spiritual, or occult sense, ether is a great deal more than is often imagined. In occult physics, and alchemy, it is well demonstrated to enclose within

its shoreless waves not only Mr. Tyndall's *'promise* and potency of every quality of life', but also the *realization* of the potency of every quality of spirit. Alchemists and Hermetists believe that their *astral*, or sidereal ether, besides the above properties of sulphur, and white and red magnesia, or *magnes*, is the *anima mundi,* the workshop of Nature and of all the Kosmos, spiritually, as well as physically. The 'grand magisterium' asserts itself in the phenomenon of mesmerism, in the 'levitation' of human and inert objects; and may be called the ether from its spiritual aspect. The designation *astral* is ancient, and was used by some of the Neo-platonists, although it is claimed by some that the word was coined by the Martinists. Porphyry describes the celestial body which is always joined with the soul as 'immortal, luminous, and star-like'. The root of this word may be found, perhaps, in the Scythic *Aist-aer* – which means star, or the Assyrian *Istar,* which, according to Burnouf has the same sense." *(Isis Unveiled.*)

Asuras (*Sk.*). Exoterically, elementals and evil, gods – considered maleficent; demons, and ***no*** gods. But esoterically – the reverse. For in the most ancient portions of the *Rig Veda,* the term is used for the Supreme Spirit, and therefore the Asuras are spiritual and divine It is only in the last book of the *Rig Veda*, its latest part, and in the *Atharva Veda,* and the *Brâhmanas,* that the epithet, which had been given to Agni, the greatest Vedic Deity, to Indra and Varuna, has come to signify the reverse of gods. *Asu* means breath, and it is with his breath that Prajâpati (Brahmâ) creates the Asuras. When ritualism and dogma got the better of the Wisdom religion, the initial letter **a** was adopted as a negative prefix, and the term ended by signifying "not a god", and Sura only a deity. But in the *Vedas* the Suras have ever been connected with *Surya,* the sun, and regarded as *inferior* deities, *devas*.

Aswattha (*Sk.*) The ***Bo-tree***, the tree of knowledge, ***ficus religiosa***.

Atmâ (or **Atman**) (*Sk.*). The Universal Spirit, the divine Monad, the 7th Principle, so-called, in the septenary constitution of man. The Supreme Soul.

Atma-bhu (*Sk.*). Soul-existence, or existing as soul. (See "***Alaya***".)

Atmabodha (*Sk.*). Lit., "Self-knowledge"; the title of a Vedantic treatise by Sankârachârya.

Atma-jnâni (*Sk.*) The Knower of the World-Soul, or Soul in general.

Atma Vidyâ (*Sk.*). The highest form of spiritual knowledge; lit., "Soul-knowledge".

Atri, Sons of (*Sk.*). A class of Pitris, the "ancestors of man", or the so-called Prâjapâti, "progenitors"; one of the seven Rishis who form the constellation of the Great Bear.

Attavada (*Pali*). The sin of personality.

Aum (*Sk.*). The sacred syllable; the triple-lettered unit; hence the trinity in One.

Avalokiteswara (*Sk.*) "The on-looking Lord" In the exoteric interpretation, he is Padmapâni (the lotus bearer and the lotus-born) in Tibet, the first divine ancestor of the Tibetans, the complete incarnation or *Avatar* of Avalokiteswara; but in esoteric philosophy Avaloki, the "on-looker", is the Higher Self, while Padmapâni is the Higher Ego or *Manas*. The mystic formula "Om mani padme hum" is specially used to invoke their joint help. While popular fancy claims for Avalokiteswara many incarnations on earth, and sees in him, not very wrongly, the spiritual guide of every believer, the esoteric interpretation sees in him the *Logos*, both celestial and human. Therefore, when the Yogâchârya School has declared Avalokiteswara as Padmâpani "to be the Dhyâni Bodhi*sattva* of Amitâbha Buddha", it is indeed, because the former is *the spiritual reflex in the world of forms* of the latter, both being one – one in heaven, the other on earth.

Avatâra (*Sk.*) Divine incarnation. The descent of a god or some exalted Being, who has progressed beyond the necessity of Rebirths, into the body of a simple mortal. Krishna was an avatar of Vishnu. The Dalai Lama is regarded as an avatar of Avalokiteswara, and the Teschu Lama as one of Tson-kha-pa, or Amitâbha. There are two kinds of avatars: those born from woman, and the parentless, the *anupapâdaka*.

Avidyâ (*Sk.*). Opposed to *Vidyâ*, Knowledge. Ignorance which proceeds from, and is produced by the illusion of the Senses or *Viparyaya.*

B.

Barhishad (*Sk.*). A class of the "lunar" Pitris or "Ancestors", Fathers, who are believed in popular superstition to have kept up in their past incarnations the household sacred flame and made fire-offerings. Esoterically the Pitris who evolved their shadows or *chhayas* to make there-with the first man. (See *Secret Doctrine,* Vol. II.)

Bhagavad-Gita (*Sk.*). Lit., "the Lord's Song". A portion of the Mahabharata, the great epic poem of India. It contains a dialogue wherein Krishna—the "Charioteer"—and Arjuna, his Chela, have a discussion upon

the highest spiritual philosophy. The work is pre-eminently occult or esoteric.

Bhagavat (*Sk.*). A title of the Buddha and of Krishna. "The Lord" literally.

Bhâshya (*Sk*) A commentary.

Bodhi*sattva* (*Sk).* Lit., "he, whose essence (*sattva*) has become intelligence *(bodhi*)"; those who need but one more incarnation to become perfect Buddhas, i.e., to be entitled to Nirvâna. This, as applied to *Manushi* (terrestrial) Buddhas. In the metaphysical sense, *Bodhisattva* is a title given to the sons of the celestial *Dhyâni* Buddhas.

Brahma (*Sk.*). The student must distinguish between Brahma the neuter, and Brahmâ, the male creator of the Indian Pantheon. The former, Brahma or Brahman, is the impersonal, supreme and uncognizable Principle of the Universe from the essence of which all emanates, and into which all returns, which is incorporeal, immaterial, unborn, eternal, beginningless and endless. It is all-pervading, animating the highest god as well as the smallest mineral atom. Brahmâ on the other hand, the male and the alleged Creator, exists periodically in his manifestation only, and then again goes into *pralaya,* i.e., disappears and is annihilated.

Brahmâ's Day. A period of 2,160,000,000 years during which Brahmâ having emerged out of his golden egg *(Hiranyagarbha*), creates and fashions the material world (being simply the fertilizing and creative force in Nature). After this period, the worlds being destroyed in turn, by fire and water, he vanishes with objective nature, and then comes Brahmâ's Night.

Brahmâ's Night. A period of equal duration, during which Brahmâ. is said to be asleep. Upon awakening he recommences the process, and this goes on for an AGE of Brahmâ composed of alternate "Days", and "Nights", and lasting 100 years (of 2,160,000,000 years each). It requires fifteen figures to express the duration of such an age; after the expiration of which the *Mahapralaya* or the Great Dissolution sets in, and lasts in its turn for the same space of fifteen figures.

Brahmâ Vâch (*Sk.*) Male and female Brahmâ. Vâch is also some-times called the female logos; for Vâch means Speech, literally. (See *Manu* Book I., and *Vishnu Purâna.*)

Brahma Vidyâ (*Sk.*) The knowledge, the esoteric science, about the two Brahmas and their true nature.

Brahmâ Virâj (*Sk.*) The same: Brahmâ separating his body into two halves, male and female, creates in them Vâch and Virâj. In plainer terms and *esotericlly* Brahmâ the Universe, differentiating, produced thereby material nature, Virâj, and spiritual intelligent Nature, Vâch – which is the *Logos* of Deity or the manifested expression of the eternal divine Ideation.

Brâhman (*Sk.*) The highest of the four castes in India, one supposed or rather fancying himself, as high among men, as Brahman, the ABSOLUTE of the Vedantins, is high among, or above the gods.

Brahmâputrâs (*Sk.*) The Sons of Brahmâ.

Buddha (*Sk.*). Lit., "The Enlightened". The highest degree of knowledge. To become a Buddha one has to break through the bondage of sense and personality; to acquire a complete perception of the REAL SELF and learn not to separate it from all otherselves; to learn by experience the utter unreality of all phenomena of the visible Kosmos foremost of all; to reach a complete detachment from all that is evanescent and finite, and live while yet on Earth in the immortal and the everlasting alone, in a supreme state of holiness.

Buddhi *(Sk.*). Universal Soul or Mind. *Mahâbuddhi* is a name of Mahat (see "A*laya*"); also the spiritual Soul in man (the sixth principle), the vehicle of Atmâ exotericallv the seventh.

***Buddhi*sm**. *Buddhi*sm is now split into two distinct Churches : the Southern and the Northern Church. The former is said to be the purer form, as having preserved more religiously the original teachings of the Lord Buddha. It is the religion of Ceylon, Siam, Burmah and other places, while Northern *Buddhi*sm is confined to Tibet, China and Nepaul. Such a distinction, however, is incorrect. If the Southern Church is nearer, in that it has not departed, except perhaps in some trifling dogmas due to the many councils held after the death of the Master, from the public or *exoteric* teachings of Sâkyamuni – the Northern Church is the outcome of Siddhârta Buddha's esoteric teachings which he confined to his elect Bhikshus and Arhats. In fact, *Buddhi*sm in the present age, cannot he justly judged either by one or the other of its exoteric popular forms. Real *Buddhi*sm can be appreciated only by blending the philosophy of the Southern Church and the metaphysics of the Northern Schools. If one seems too iconoclastic and stero:, and the other too metaphysical and transcendental, even to being overgrown with the weeds of Indian exotericism – many of the gods of its Pantheon having been transplanted

under new names to Tibetan soil – it is entirely due to the popular expression of *Buddhi*sm in both Churches. Correspondentially they stand in their relation to each other as Protestantism to Roman Catholicism. Both err by an excess of zeal and erroneous interpretations, though neither the Southern nor the Northern Buddhist clergy have ever departed from truth consciously, still less have they acted under the dictates of *priestocracy*, ambition, or with an eye to personal gain and power, as the two Christian Churches have.

C

Causal Body. This "body", which is no body either objective or subjective, but *Buddhi,* the Spiritual Soul, is so called because it is the direct cause of the Sushupti condition, leading to the *Turya* state, the highest state of *Samadhi*. It is called *Karanopadhi*, "the basis of the Cause", by the Târaka Raja *Yogis*; and in the Vedânta system it corresponds to both the *Vignânamaya* and *Anandamaya Kosha*, the latter coming next to Atma, and therefore being the vehicle of the universal Spirit. *Buddhi* alone could not be called a "Causal Body ", but becomes so in conjunction with *Manas*, the incarnating Entity or EGO.

Chakra (*Sk.*) A wheel, a disk, or the circle of Vishnu generally. Used also of a cycle of time, and with other meanings.

Chaldeans, or *Kasdim.* At first a tribe, then a caste of learned Kabbalists. They were the *savants,* the magians of Babylonia, astrologers and diviners. The famous Hillel, the precursor of Jesus in philosophy and in ethics, was a Chaldean. Franck in his *Kabbala* points to the close resemblance of the "secret doctrine" found in the *Avesta* and the religious metaphysics of the Chaldees.

Chelâ (*Sk.*) A disciple, the pupil of a Guru or Sage, the follower of some adept of a school of philosophy *(lit.*, child).

Chhâyâ (*Sk.*) "Shade" or "Shadow". The name of a creature produced by Sanjnâ, the wife of Surya, from herself (astral body). Unable to endure the ardour of her husband, Sanjnâ left Chhâyâ in her place as a wife, going herself away to perform austerities. Chhâyâ is the astral image of a person in esoteric philosophy.

Chhaya loka (*Sk.*) The world of Shades; like Hades, the world of the *Eidola* and *Umbræ*. We call it *Kâmaloka*.

Chidâkâsam (Sk); The field, or basis of consciousness.

Chohan (*Tib*.) "Lord" or "Master" ; a chief; thus ***Dhyan-Chohan*** would answer to "Chief of the Dhyanis", or celestial Lights – which in English would be translated Archangels.

Chréstos (*Gr*.) The early Gnostic form of Christ. It was used in the fifth century B.C. by Æschylus, Herodotus, and others. The *Manteumata pythochresta,* or the "oracles delivered by a Pythian god" "through a pythoness, are mentioned by the former (*Choeph*.901). *Chréstian* is not only "the seat of an oracle", but an offering to, or for, the oracle.

Chréstés is one who explains oracles, "a prophet and soothsayer", and Chrésterios one who serves an oracle or a god. The earliest Christian writer, Justin Martyr, in his first *Apology* calls his co-religionists Chréstians. It is only through ignorance that men call themselves Christians instead of Chréstians," says Lactantius (lib. iv., cap. vii.). The terms Christ and Christians, spelt originally Chrést and Chréstians, were borrowed from the Temple vocabulary of the Pagans. Chréstos meant in that vocabulary a disciple on probation, a candidate for hierophantship. When he had attained to this through initiation, long trials, and suffering, and had been ‘‘*anointed*" (i.e., "rubbed with oil", as were Initiates and even idols of the gods, as the last touch of ritualistic observance), his name was changed into Christos, the "purified", in esoteric or mystery language. In mystic symbology, indeed, *Christés*, or *Christos,* meant that the "Way", the Path, was already trodden and the goal reached ; when the fruits of the arduous labour, uniting the personality of evanescent clay with the indestructible INDIVIDUALITY, transformed it thereby into the immortal EGO. "At the end of the Way stands the *Chréstes”*, the *Purifier*, and the union once accomplished, the *Chrestos,* the "man of sorrow", became *Christos* himself. Paul, the Initiate, knew this, and meant this precisely, when he is made to say, in bad translation : ‘‘I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. iv.19), the true rendering of which is . . . ‘‘until ye form the Christos within yourselves" But the profane who knew only that Chréstés was in some way connected with priest and prophet, and knew nothing about the hidden meaning of Christos, insisted, as did Lactantius and Justin Martyr, on being called *Chréstians* instead of Christians. Every good individual, therefore, may find Christ in his "inner man" as Paul expresses it (Ephes. iii. 16,17), whether he be Jew, Mussulman, Hindu, or Christian. Kenneth Mackenzie seemed to think that the word *Chréstos* was a synonym of Soter, "an appellation assigned to deities, great kings and heroes," indicating ‘‘Saviour,'' – and he was right. For, as he adds:"It has been applied redundantly to Jesus Christ, whose

name Jesus or Joshua bears the same interpretation. The name Jesus, in fact, is rather a title of honour than a name – the true name of the Soter of Christianity being Emmanuel, or God with us (*Matt*.i, 23.).Great divinities among all nations, who are represented as expiatory or self-sacrificing, have been designated by the same title." *(R. M. Cyclop*.) The Asklepios (or Æsculapius) of the Greeks had the title of *Soter***.**

Cosmic Gods. Inferior gods, those connected with the formation of matter.

Cosmic ideation (*Occult*.) Eternal thought, impressed on substance or spirit-matter, in the eternity ; thought which becomes active at the beginning of every new life-cycle.

Cycle. From the Greek *Kuklos*. The ancients divided time into end less cycles, wheels within wheels, all such periods being of various durations, and each marking the beginning or the end of some event either cosmic, mundane, physical or metaphysical. There were cycles of only a few years, and cycles of immense duration, the great Orphic cycle, referring to the ethnological change of races, lasting 120,000 years, and the cycle of Cassandrus of 136,000, which brought about a complete change in planetary influences and their correlations between men and gods – a fact entirely lost sight of by modern astrologers.

D

Dæmon (*Gr*.) In the original Hermetic works and ancient classics it has a meaning identical with that of "god", "angel" or "genius". The Dæmon of Socrates is the incorruptible part of the man, or rather the real inner man which we call Nous or the rational divine Ego. At all events the Dæmon (or Daimon of the great Sage was surely not the demon of the Christian Hell or of Christian orthodox theology. The name was given by ancient peoples, and especially the philosophers of the Alexandrian school, to all kinds of spirits, whether good or bad, human or otherwise. The appellation is often synonymous with that of gods or angels. But some philosophers tried, with good reason, to make a just distinction between the many classes.

Daitya Guru *(Sk*.) The instructor of the giants, called *Daityas (q.v.)* Allegorically, it is the title given to the planet Venus-Lucifer, or rather to its indwelling Ruler, *Sukra,* a male deity (See *Sec. Doct*.. ii. p. 30).

Daityas *(Sk.*) Giants, Titans, and exoterically demons, but in truth identical with certain Asuras, the intellectual gods, the opponents of the useless gods of ritualism and the enemies of *puja* sacrifices.

Daksha (*Sk.*) A form of Brahmâ and his son in the Purânas But the *Rig Veda* states that "Daksha sprang from Aditi, and Aditi from Daksha", which proves him to be a personified correlating Creative Force acting on *all the planes.* The Orientalists seem very much perplexed what to make of him; but Roth is nearer the truth than any, when saying that Daksha is the spiritual power, and at the same time the male energy that generates the gods in eternity, which is represented by Aditi. The Purânas as a matter of course, anthropomorphize the idea, and show Daksha instituting "sexual intercourse on this earth", after trying every other means of procreation. The generative Force, spiritual at the commencement, becomes of course at the most material end of its evolution a procreative Force on the physical plane ; and so far the Purânic allegory is correct, as the Secret Science teaches that our present mode of procreation began towards the end of the third Root-Race.

Dangma (*Sk.*) In Esotericism a purified Soul. A Seer and an Initiate; one who has attained full wisdom.

Darsanas (*Sk.*) The Schools of Indian philosophy, of which there are six; *Shad-darsanas* or six demonstrations.

Day of Brahmâ. See "Brahmâ's Day" etc.

Demiurgic Mind. The same as "Universal Mind". Mahat, the first "product" of Brahmâ, or himself.

Demiurgos (*Gr*) The Demiurge or Artificer; the Supernal Power which built the universe. Freemasons derive from this word their phrase of "Supreme Architect ". With the Occultists it is the third manifested *Logos*, or Plato's "second god", the second logos being represented by him as the "Father", the only Deity that he dared mention as an Initiate into the Mysteries.

Demons. According to the *Kabbalah*, the demons dwell in the world of Assiah, the world of matter and of the "shells"' of the dead. They are the Klippoth. There are Seven Hells, whose demon dwellers represent the vices personified. Their prince is Samael, his female companion is Isheth Zenunim – the woman of prostitution: united in aspect, they are named "The Beast", Chiva. [w.w.w.]

Demon est Deus inversus (*Lat*) A Kabbalistic axiom; lit., "the devil is god reversed"; which means that there is neither evil nor good, but that the forces which create the one create the other, according to the nature of the materials they find to work upon.

Deva (*Sk.*). A god, a "resplendent" deity. Deva-Deus, from the root *div* "to shine". A Deva is a celestial being – whether good, bad, or indifferent. Devas inhabit "the three worlds", which are the *three planes* above us. There are 33 groups or 330 millions of them.

Deva Sarga (*Sk.*). Creation: the origin of the principles, said to be Intelligence born of the qualities or the attributes of nature.

Devachan (*Sk.*). The "dwelling of the gods". A state intermediate between two earth-lives, into which the EGO (Atmâ-*Buddhi-Manas*, or the Trinity made One) enters, after its separation from Kâma Rupa, and the disintegration of the lower principles on earth.

Devajnânas (*Sk.*). or *Daivajna.* The higher classes of celestial beings, those who possess divine knowledge.

Deva-lôkas *(Sk.*). The abodes of the Gods or Devas in superior spheres. The seven celestial worlds above Meru.

Devamâtri (*Sk.*). Lit., "the mother of the gods". A title of Aditi, Mystic Space.

Dhârana (*Sk*). That state in *Yoga* practice when the mind has to be fixed unflinchingly on some object of meditation.

Dhâranî *(Sk.*). In *Buddhi*sm—both Southern and Northern—and also in Hinduism, it means simply a *mantra* or *mantras*—sacred verses from the *Rig Veda.* In days of old these mantras or Dhâranî were all considered mystical and practically efficacious in their use. At present, however, it is the Yogâchârya school alone which proves the claim in practice. When chanted according to given instructions a **Dhâranî** produces wonderful effects. Its occult power, however, does not reside in the *words* but in the inflexion or accent given and the resulting sound originated thereby. (See "Mantra" and "Akasa").

Dharma (*Sk.*). The sacred Law; the Buddhist Canon.

***Dharma*chakra** (*Sk.*). Lit., The turning of the "wheel of the Law". The emblem of *Buddhi*sm as a system of cycles and rebirths or reincarnations.

***Dharma*kâya** (*Sk*). Lit., "the glorified spiritual body" called the "Vesture of

Bliss". The third, or highest of the *Trikâya* (Three Bodies), the attribute developed by every "Buddha", i.e., every initiate who has crossed or reached the end of what is called the "fourth Path" (in esotericism the sixth "portal" prior to his entry on the seventh). The highest of the *Trikâya,* it is the *fourth* of the *Buddhakchêtra,* or *Buddhi*c planes of consciousness, represented figuratively in Buddhist asceticism as a robe or vesture of luminous Spirituality. In popular Northern *Buddhi*sm these vestures or robes are: (1) Nirmanakâya (2) Sambhogakâya (3) and *Dharma*kâya the last being the highest and most sublimated of all, as it places the ascetic on the threshold of Nirvâna. (See, however, the *Voice of the Silence,* page 96, *Glossary*, for the true *esoteric* meaning.)

Dhyan Chohans (*Sk*). Lit., "The Lords of Light". The highest gods, answering to the Roman Catholic Archangels. The divine Intelligences charged with the supervision of Kosmos.

Dhyâna (*Sk.*). In *Buddhi*sm one of the six Paramitas of perfection, a state of abstraction which carries the ascetic practising it far above this plane of sensuous perception and out of the world of matter. Lit., "contemplation". The six stages of Dhyan differ only in the degrees of abstraction of the personal Ego from sensuous life.

Dhyani Bodhisattyas (*Sk.*). In *Buddhi*sm, the five sons of the Dhyani-Buddhas. They have a mystic meaning in Esoteric Philosophy.

Dhyani Buddhas (*Sk.*). They "of the Merciful Heart"; worshipped especially in Nepaul. These have again a secret meaning.

Dianoia (*Gr.*). The same as the *Logos*. The eternal source of thought, "divine ideation", which is the root of all thought. (See "Ennoia.")

Djnâna (*Sk*), or *Jnâna.* Lit., Knowledge; esoterically, "supernal or divine knowledge acquired by *Yoga*". Written also *Gnyana*.

Drakôn (*Gr.*) or Dragon. Now considered a "mythical" monster, perpetuated in the West only on seals,. &c., as a heraldic griffin, and the Devil slain by St. George, &c. In fact an extinct antediluvian monster In Babylonian antiquities it is referred to as the "scaly one" and connected on many gems with Tiamat the sea. "The Dragon of the Sea" is repeatedly mentioned. In Egypt, it is the star of the Dragon (then the North Pole Star), the origin of the connection of almost all the gods with the Dragon. Bel and the Dragon, Apollo and Python, Osiris and Typhon, Sigur and Fafnir, and finally St. George and the Dragon, are the same. They were all solar

gods, and wherever we find the Sun there also is the Dragon, the symbol of Wisdom—Thoth-Hermes. The Hierophants of Egypt and of Babylon styled themselves "Sons of the Serpent-God" and "Sons of the Dragon". "I am a Serpent, I am a Druid", said the Druid of the Celto-Britannic regions, for the Serpent and the Dragon were both types of Wisdom, Immortality and Rebirth. As the serpent casts its old skin only to reappear in a new one, so does the immortal Ego cast off one personality but to assume another.

Dwapara Yuga (*Sk*.). The third of the "Four Ages" in Hindu Philosophy; or the second age counted from below.

Dynasties. In India there are two, the Lunar and the Solar, or the *Somavansa* and the *Suryavansa*. In Chaldea and Egypt there were also two distinct kinds of dynasties, the *divine* and the *human.* In both countries people were ruled in the beginning of time by Dynasties of Gods. In Chaldea they reigned one hundred and twenty Sari, or in all 432,000 years; which amounts to the same figures as a Hindu Mahayuga 4,320,000 years. The chronology prefacing the *Book of Genesis* (English translation) is given "Before Christ, 4004". But the figures are a rendering by solar years. In the original Hebrew, which preserved a lunar calculation, the figures are 4,320 years. This "coincidence" is well explained in Occultism.

Dzyan or Dzyn (*Tib*.). Written also *Dzen*. A corruption of the Sanskrit Dhyan and *jnâna* (or *gnyâna* phonetically) – Wisdom, divine knowledge. In Tibetan, learning is called *dzin.*

E

Ego (*Lat*.). "Self" ; the consciousness in man "I am I" – or the feeling of "I-am-ship". Esoteric philosophy teaches the existence of two Egos in man, the mortal or personal, and the Higher, the Divine and the Impersonal, calling the former "personality" and the latter "Individuality Egoity. From the word "Ego". Egoity means "individuality", never "personality", and is the opposite of egoism or "selfishness", the characteristic par excellence of the latter.

Elementals. Spirits of the Elements. The creatures evolved in the four Kingdoms or Elements – earth, air, fire, and water. They are called by the Kabbalists, Gnomes (of the earth), Sylphs (of the air), Salamanders (of the fire), and Undines (of the water). Except a few of the higher kinds, and their rulers, they are rather forces of nature than ethereal men and women. These forces, as the servile agents of the Occultists, may produce various

effects; but if employed by" Elementaries" *(q.v.)*_in which case they enslave the mediums – they will deceive the credulous. All the lower invisible beings generated on the 5th 6th, and 7th planes of our terrestrial atmosphere, are called Elementals Peris, Devs, Djins, Sylvans, Satyrs, Fauns, Elves, Dwarfs, Trolls, Kobolds, Brownies, Nixies, Goblins, Pinkies, Banshees, Moss People, White Ladies, Spooks, Fairies, etc., etc., etc.

Elementaries. Properly, the disembodied souls of the depraved; these souls having at some time prior to death separated from themselves their divine spirits, and so lost their chance for immortality; but at the present stage of learning it has been thought best to apply the term to the spooks or phantoms of disembodied persons, in general, to those whose temporary habitation is the Kâma Loka. Eliphas Lévi and some other Kabbalists make little distinction between elementary spirits who have been men, and those beings which people the elements, and are the blind forces of nature. Once divorced from their higher triads and their bodies, these souls remain in their *Kâma-rupic* envelopes, and are irresistibly drawn to the earth amid elements congenial to their gross natures. Their stay in the Kâma Loka varies as to its duration; but ends invariably in disintegration, dissolving like a column of mist, atom by atom, in the surrounding elements.

Elohîm (*Heb.*). Also *Alhim,* the word being variously spelled. Godfrey Higgins, who has written much upon its meaning, always spells it *Aleim*. The Hebrew letters are *aleph, lamed, hé,yod, mem*, and are numerically 1, 30, 5, 10, 40 = 86. It seems to be the plural of the feminine noun *Eloah*, ALH, formed by adding the common plural form IM, a masculine ending; and hence the whole seems to imply the emitted active and passive essences. As a title it is referred to "Binah" the Supernal Mother, as is also the fuller title IHVH ALHIM, Jehovah Elohim. As Binah leads on to seven succeedent Emanations, so "Elohim" has been said to represent a sevenfold power of godhead. [w.w. w.]

Emanation ***the Doctrine of***. In its metaphysical meaning, it is opposed to Evolution, yet one with it. Science teaches that evolution is physiologically a mode of generation in which the germ that develops the foetus pre-exists already in the parent, the development and final form and characteristics of that germ being accomplished in nature; and that in cosmology the process takes place blindly through the correlation of the elements, and their various compounds. Occultism answers that this is only the ***apparent*** mode, the real process being Emanation, guided by intelligent Forces

under an immutable LAW. Therefore, while the Occultists and Theosophists believe thoroughly in the doctrine of Evolution as given out by Kapila and Manu, they are *Emanationists* rather than *Evolutionists.* The doctrine of Emanation was at one time universal. It was taught by the Alexandrian as well as by the Indian philosophers, by the Egyptian, the Chaldean and Hellenic Hierophants, and also by the Hebrews (in their Kabbala, and even in *Genesis).* For it is only owing to deliberate mistranslation that the Hebrew word asdt has been translated "angels" from the Septuagint, when it means *Emanations, Æons*, precisely as with the Gnostics. Indeed, in Deuteronomy (xxxiii., 2) the word *asdt* or *ashdt* is translated as" fiery law", whilst the correct rendering of the passage should be "from his right hand went [not a fiery law, but a fire according to law "; viz., that the fire of one flame is imparted to, and caught up by another like as in a trail of inflammable substance. This is precisely emanation. As shown in Isis Unveiled : "In Evolution, as it is now beginning to he understood, there is supposed to be in all matter an impulse to take on a higher form – a supposition clearly expressed by Manu and other Hindu philosophers of the highest antiquity. The philosopher's tree illustrates it in the case of the zinc solution. The controversy between the followers of this school and the Emanationists may he briefly stated thus The Evolutionist stops all inquiry at the borders of ‘ the Unknowable "; the Emanationist believes that nothing can be evolved – or, as the word means, unwombed or born – except it has first been involved, thus indicating that life is from a spiritual potency above the whole."

En (or **Ain**) **Soph** (*Heb.*). The endless, limitless and boundless. The absolute deific Principle, impersonal and unknowable. It means literally "no-thing" i.e., nothing that could be classed with anything else. The word and ideas are equivalent to the Vedantic conceptions of Parabrahmn. [w.w.w.]

Some Western Kabbalists, however, contrive to make of IT, a personal "He", a male deity instead of an impersonal deity.

Epimetheus (*Gr.*). Lit., "He who takes counsel *after*" the event. A brother of Prometheus in Greek Mythology.

Epinoia (*Gr.*). Thought, invention, design. A name adopted by the Gnostics for the first passive Æon.

Eros (*Gr.*). Hesiod makes of the god Eros the third personage of the Hellenic primordial Trinity composed of Ouranos, Gæa and Eros. It is the personified procreative Force in nature in its abstract sense, the propeller to "creation" and procreation. Exoterically, mythology makes of Eros the god of lustful, animal desire, whence the term *erotic* esoterically, it is different. (See "Kâma".)

Esoteric (*Gr.*). Hidden, secret. From the Greek *esotericos*, "inner" concealed.

Esoteric Bodhism. Secret wisdom or intelligence from the Greek *esotericos* "inner", and the Sanskrit *Bodhi*, "knowledge", intelligence – in contradistinction to *Buddhi,* "the *faculty* of knowledge or intelligence" and *Buddhism*, the philosophy or Law of Buddha (the Enlightened). Also written "Budhism", from *Budha* (Intelligence and Wisdom) the Son of Soma.

Ether. Students are but too apt to confuse this with Akâsa and with Astral Light. It is neither, in the sense in which ether is described by physical Science. Ether is a material agent, though hitherto undetected by any physical apparatus; whereas Akâsa is a distinctly spiritual agent, identical, in one sense, with the Anima Mundi, while the Astral Light is only the seventh and highest principle of the terrestrial atmosphere, as undetectable as Akâsa and real Ether, because it is something quite on another plane. The seventh principle of the earth's atmosphere, as said, the Astral Light, is only the second on the Cosmic scale. The scale of Cosmic Forces, Principles and Planes, of Emanations – on the metaphysical – and Evolutions – on the physical plane – is the Cosmic Serpent biting its own tail, the Serpent reflecting the Higher, and reflected in its turn by the lower Serpent. The Caduceus explains the mystery, and the four-fold Dodecahedron on the model of which the universe is said by Plato to have been built by the manifested *Logos* – synthesized by the unmanifested First-Born – yields geometrically the key to Cosmogony and its microcosmic reflection – our Earth.

Evolution. The development of higher orders of animals from lower. As said in *Isis Unveiled:* "Modern Science holds but to a one-sided physical evolution, prudently avoiding and ignoring the higher or spiritual evolution, which would force our contemporaries to confess the superiority of the ancient philosophers and psychologists over themselves. The ancient sages, ascending to the UNKNOWABLE, made their starting-point from the first manifestation of the unseen, the unavoidable, and, from a strictly logical reasoning, the absolutely necessary creative Being,

the Demiurgos of the universe. Evolution began with them from pure spirit, which descending lower and lower down, assumed at last a visible and comprehensible form, and became matter. Arrived at this point, they speculated in the Darwinian method, but on a far more large and comprehensive basis." (See "Emanation".)

Exoteric. Outward, public; the opposite of esoteric or hidden.

F

First Point. Metaphysically the first point of manifestation, the germ of primeval differentiation, or the point in the infinite Circle "whose centre is everywhere, and circumference nowhere". The Point is the *Logos*.

Fire (*Living)*. A figure of speech to denote deity, the "One" life. A theurgic term, used later by the Rosicrucians. The symbol of the *living fire* is the sun, *certain of whose rays develope the fire of life in a diseased body, impart the knowledge of the future* to the sluggish mind, and stimulate to active function a certain psychic and generally dormant faculty in man. The meaning is very occult.

Fohat (*Tib.*). A term used to represent the active (male) potency of the Sakti (female reproductive power) in nature. The essence of cosmic electricity. An occult Tibetan term for *Daiviprakriti* primordial light: and in the universe of manifestation the ever-present electrical energy and ceaseless destructive and formative power. Esoterically, it is the same, Fohat being the universal propelling Vital Force, at once the propeller and the resultant.

G

Gautama (*Sk.*) The Prince of Kapilavastu, son of Sudhôdana, the Sâkya king of a small realm on the borders of Nepaul, born in the seventh century B.c., now called the "Saviour of the World". Gautama or Gôtama was the sacerdotal name of the Sâkya family, and Sidhârtha was Buddha's name before he became a Buddha. Sâkya Muni, means the Saint of the Sâkya family. Born a simple mortal he rose to Buddhaship through his own personal and unaided merit. A man—verily greater than any god!

Gayâtri (*Sk.*) also *Sâvitri*. A most sacred verse, addressed to the Sun, in the Rig -Veda, which the Brahmans have to repeat mentally every morn and eve during their devotions.

Genii (*Lat*.) A name for Æons, or angels, with the Gnostics. The names of their hierarchies and classes are simply legion.

Gnâna (*Sk*.) Knowledge as applied to the esoteric sciences.

Gnân Devas (*Sk*.) Lit., "the gods of knowledge". The higher classes of gods or *devas*; the "mind-born" sons of Brahmâ, and others including the *Manas*a-putras (the Sons of Intellect). Esoterically, our reincarnating Egos.

Gnânasakti (Sk.) The power of true knowledge, one of the seven great forces in Nature (*six,* exoterically).

Gnôsis (*Gr*.) Lit., "knowledge". The technical term used by the schools of religious philosophy, both before and during the first centuries of so-called Christianity, to denote the object of their enquiry. This Spiritual and Sacred Knowledge, the *Gupta Vidya* of the Hindus, could only be obtained by Initiation into Spiritual Mysteries of which the ceremonial "Mysteries" were a type.

Gnostics (*Gr*.) The philosophers who formulated and taught the Gnôsis or Knowledge (*q.v*.). They flourished in the first three centuries of the Christian era: the following were eminent, Valentinus, Basilides, Marcion, Simon Magus, etc. [w.w. w.]

Golden Age. The ancients divided the life cycle into the Golden, Silver, Bronze and Iron Ages. The Golden was an age of primeval purity, simplicity and general happiness.

Great Age. There were several "great ages" mentioned by the ancients. In India it embraced the whole Maha-manvantara, the "age of Brahmâ", each "Day" of which represents the life cycle of a chain – i.e. it embraces a period of seven Rounds. (See *Esoteric Buddhism,* by A. P. Sinnett.) Thus while a "Day" and a "Night" represent, as Manvantara and Pra*laya*, 8,640,000,000 years, an "age" lasts through a period of 311,040,000,000,000 years; after which the Pra*laya*, or dissolution of the universe, becomes universal. With the Egyptians and Greeks the "great age" referred only to the tropical or sidereal year, the duration of which is 25,868 solar years. Of the complete age – that of the gods – they say nothing, as it was a matter to he discussed and divulged only in the Mysteries, during the initiating ceremonies. The "great age" of the Chaldees was the same in figures as that of the Hindus.

Grihastha (*Sk.*) Lit., "a householder", "one who lives in a house with his family". A Brahman "family priest" in popular rendering, and the sarcerdotal hierarchy of the Hindus.

Guardian Wall. A suggestive name given to the host of translated adepts (Narjols) or the Saints collectively, who are supposed to watch over, help and protect Humanity. This is the so-called "Nirmanâkâya" doctrine in Northern mystic *Buddhi*sm. (See *Voice of the Silence*, Part III.)

Guhya Vidyâ(*Sk.*) The secret knowledge of mystic Mantras.

Gunas (*Sk*) Qualities, attributes (See" Triguna") ; a thread, also a cord.

Gupta Vidyâ (*Sk.*) The same as Guhya Vidyâ; Esoteric or Secret Science; knowledge.

Guru (*Sk.*) Spiritual Teacher; a master in metaphysical and ethical doctrines; used also for a teacher of any science.

Guru Deva (*Sk.*) Lit., "divine Master".

H

Hatha *Yoga* (*Sk.*) The lower form of *Yoga* practice; one which uses physical means for purposes of spiritual self-development The opposite of *Râja Yoga.*

Hermaphrodite (*Gr.*). Dual-sexed; a male and female Being, whether man or animal.

Hermes Trismegistus (*Gr.*). The "thrice great Hermes", the Egyptian. The mythical personage after whom the Hermetic philosophy was named. In Egypt the God Thoth or Thot. A generic name of many ancient Greek writers on philosophy and Alchemy. Hermes Trismegistus is the name of Hermes or Thoth in his human aspect, as a god he is far more than this. As *Hermes-Thoth-Aah*, he is Thoth, the moon, i.e., his symbol is the bright side of the moon, supposed to contain the essence of creative Wisdom, "the elixir of Hermes ". As such he is associated with the Cynocephalus, the dog-headed monkey, for the same reason as was Anubis, one of the aspects of Thoth. (See "Hermanubis".) The same idea underlies the form of the Hindu God of Wisdom, the elephant-headed Ganesa, or Ganpat, the son of Parvati and Siva. (See "Ganesa".) When he has the head of an *ibis,* he is the sacred scribe of the gods; but even then he wears the crown ***atef*** and the lunar disk. He is the most mysterious of gods. As a serpent, Hermes

Thoth is the divine creative 'Wisdom. The Church Fathers speak at length of Thoth-Hermes. (See "Hermetic".)

Hermetic. Any doctrine or writing connected with the esoteric teachings of Hermes, who, whether as the Egyptian Thoth or the Greek Hermes, was the God of Wisdom with the Ancients, and, according to Plato, "discovered numbers, geometry, astronomy and letters". Though mostly considered as spurious, nevertheless the Hermetic writings were highly prized by St. Augustine, Lactantius, Cyril and others. In the words of Mr. J. Bonwick, "They are more or less touched up by the Platonic philosophers among the early Christians (such as Origen and Clemens Alexandrinus) who sought to substantiate their Christian arguments by appeals to these heathen and revered writings, though they could not resist the temptation of making them say a little too much. Though represented by some clever and interested writers as teaching pure monotheism, the Hermetic or Trismegistic books are, nevertheless, purely pantheistic. The Deity referred to in them is defined by Paul as that in *which* "we live, and move and have our being" – notwithstanding the "in Him" of the translators.

Hierophant. From the Greek "Hierophantes"; literally, "One who explains sacred things ". The discloser of sacred learning and the Chief of the Initiates. A title belonging to the highest Adepts in the temples of antiquity, who were the teachers and expounders of the Mysteries and the Initiators into the final great Mysteries. The Hierophant represented the Demiurge, and explained to the postulants for Initiation the various phenomena of Creation that were produced for their tuition. "He was the sole expounder of the esoteric secrets and doctrines. It was forbidden even to pronounce his name before an uninitiated person. He sat in the East, and wore as a symbol of authority a golden globe suspended from the neck. He was also called *Mystagogus*" (Kenneth R. H. Mackenzie, ix., F.T.S., in *The Royal Masonic cyclopædia*). In Hebrew and Chaldaic the term was *Peter*, the opener, discloser; hence the Pope as the successor of the hierophant of the ancient Mysteries, sits in the Pagan chair of St. Peter.

Higher Self. The Supreme Divine Spirit overshadowing man. The crown of the upper spiritual Triad in man – Atmân.

Hochmah (*Heb.*). See "Chochmah".

Hotri (*Sk.*). A priest who recites the hymns from the *Rig Veda*, and makes oblations to the fire.

Hotris (*Sk*). A symbolical name for the *seven* senses called, in the *Anugita* "the Seven Priests". "The senses supply the fire of mind (i.e., desire) with the oblations of external pleasures." An occult term used metaphysically.

Humanity. Occultly and Kabbalistically, the whole of mankind is symbolised, by Manu in India; by Vajra*sattva* or Dorjesempa, the head of the Seven Dhyani, in Northern *Buddhi*sm; and by Adam Kadmon in the Kabbala. All these represent the totality of mankind whose beginning is in this androgynic protoplast, and whose end is in the Absolute, beyond all these symbols and myths of human origin. Humanity is a great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed physically and morally. Unless, however, it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals.

I

Ichchha (*Sk.*). Will, or will-power.

Ichchha Sakti (*Sk.*). Will-power; force of desire; one of the occult Forces of nature. That power of the will which, exercised in occult practices, generates the nerve-currents necessary to set certain muscles in motion and to paralyze certain others.

Illusion. In Occultism everything finite (like the universe and all in it) is called illusion or *maya.*

Illuminati (*Lat.*). The "Enlightened", the initiated adepts.

Image. Occultism permits no other image than that of the living image of divine man (the symbol of Humanity) on earth. The *Kabbala* teaches that this divine Image, the copy of the *sublime and holy upper Image* (the Elohim) has now changed into *another similitude*, owing to the development of men's sinful nature. It is only the *upper divine Image* (the Ego) which is the same; the lower (personality) has changed, and man, now fearing the wild beasts, has grown to bear on his face the similitude of many of them. (*Zohar* I. fol. 71a.) In the early period of Egypt there were no images; but later, as Lenormand says, "In the sanctuaries of Egypt they divided the properties of nature and consequently of Divinity (the Elohim, or the Egos), into seven abstract qualities, characterised each by an emblem, which are matter, cohesion, fluxion, coagulation, accumulation, station and division ". These were all attributes symbolized in various images.

Incarnations *(Divine)* or *Avatars*. The Immaculate Conception is as pre-eminently Egyptian as it is Indian. As the author of *Egyptian Belief* has it: "It is not the vulgar, coarse and sensual story as in Greek mythology, but refined, moral and spiritual "; and again the incarnation idea was found revealed on the wall of a Theban temple by Samuel Sharpe, who thus analyzes it: "First the god Thoth . . . as the messenger of the gods, like the Mercury of the Greeks (or the Gabriel of the first Gospel), tells the *maiden* queen Mautmes, that she is to give birth to a son, who is to be king Amunotaph III. Secondly, the god Kneph, the Spirit . . . . and the goddess Hathor (Nature) both take hold of the queen by the hands and put into her mouth the character for life, a cross, which is to be the life of the coming child", etc., etc. Truly divine incarnation, or the *avatar* doctrine, constituted the grandest mystery of every old religious system!

Individuality. One of the names given in Theosophy and Occultism to the Human Higher EGO. We make a distinction between the immortal and divine Ego, and the mortal human Ego which perishes. The latter, or "personality" (personal Ego) survives the dead body only for a time in the Kama Loka; the Individuality prevails forever.

Initiate. From the Latin *Initiatus*. The designation of anyone who was received into and had revealed to him the mysteries and secrets of either Masonry or Occultism. In times of antiquity, those who had been initiated into the arcane knowledge taught by the Hierophants of the Mysteries; and in our modern days those who have been initiated by the adepts of mystic lore into the mysterious knowledge, which, notwithstanding the lapse of ages, has yet a few real votaries on earth.

Initiation. From the same root as the Latin *initia,* which means the basic or first principles of any Science. The practice of initiation or admission into the sacred Mysteries, taught by the Hierophants and learned priests of the Temples, is one of the most ancient customs. This was practised in every old national religion. In Europe it was abolished with the fall of the last pagan temple. There exists at present but one kind of initiation known to the public, namely that into the Masonic rites. Masonry, however, has no more secrets to give out or conceal. In the palmy days of old, the Mysteries, according to the greatest Greek and Roman philosophers, were the most sacred of all solemnities as well as the most beneficent, and greatly promoted virtue. The Mysteries represented the passage from mortal life into finite death, and the experiences of the disembodied Spirit and Soul in the world of subjectivity. In our own day, as the secret is lost,

the candidate passes through sundry meaningless ceremonies and is initiated into the solar allegory of Hiram Abiff, the "Widow's Son".

Inner Man. An occult term, used to designate the true and immortal Entity in us, not the outward and mortal form of clay that we call our body. The term applies, strictly speaking, only to the Higher Ego, the "astral man" being the appellation of the Double and of Kâma Rupa (*q.v.*) or the surviving *eidolon*.

Intercosmic gods. The Planetary Spirits, Dhyan-Chohans, Devas of various degrees of spirituality, and "Archangels" in general.

Isis. In Egyptian *Issa*, the goddess Virgin-Mother; personified nature. In Egyptian or Koptic *Uasari,* the female reflection of *Uasar* or Osiris. She is the "woman clothed with the sun" of the land of Chemi. Isis Latona is the Roman Isis.

Iswara (*Sk.*). The "Lord" or the personal god – *divine Spirit in man. Lit*., sovereign (independent) existence. A title given to Siva and other gods in India. Siva is also called Iswaradeva, or sovereign deva.

J

Jhâna (*Sk.*) or *Jnana*. Knowledge; Occult Wisdom.

Jiva *(Sk.*). Life, as the Absolute; the Monad also or "Atma-*Buddhi*".

Jivanmukta (*Sk.*). An adept or yogi who has reached the ultimate state of holiness, and separated himself from matter; a *Mahatma*, or *Nirvânee*, a "dweller in bliss" and emancipation. Virtually one who has reached Nirvâna during life.

Jivatma (*Sk.*). The ONE universal life, generally; but also the divine Spirit in Man.

Jnânam (*Sk.*). The same as "Gnâna", etc., the same as "Jhâna" (*q.v.*).

Jnânendriyas (*Sk.*). The five channels of knowledge.

Jnâna Sakti (*Sk.*). The power of intellect.

K

Kadmon (*Heb.*). Archetypal man. See."Adam Kadmon".

Kaliyuga (*Sk.*). The fourth, the black or iron age, our present period, the duration of which us 432,000 years. The last of the ages into which the evolutionary period of man is divided by a series of such ages. It began

3,102 years B.C. at the moment of Krishna's death, and the first cycle of 5,ooo years will end between the years 1897 and 1898.

Kalpa (*Sk.*). The period of a mundane revolution, generally a cycle of time, but usually, it represents a "day" and "night" of Brahmâ, a period of 4,320,000,000 years.

Kama (*Sk.*) Evil desire, lust, volition; the cleaving to existence. Kama is generally identified with *Mara* the tempter.

Kamadeva *(Sk.*). In the popular notions the god of love, a Visva-deva, in the Hindu Pantheon. As the *Eros* of Hesiod, degraded into Cupid by exoteric law, and still more degraded by a later popular sense attributed to the term, so is Kama a most mysterious and metaphysical subject. The earlier Vedic description of Kama alone gives the key-note to what he emblematizes. Kama is the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE Force, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE. Says the *Rig Veda*, "Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind, and which Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity", or *Manas* with pur*e Atma-Buddhi*. There is no idea of sexual love in the conception. Kama is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love; and it is only ages later, as mankind began to materialize by anthropomorphization its grandest ideals into cut and dried dogmas, that Kama became the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane. This is shown by what every *Veda* and some *Brahmanas* say. In the *Atharva Veda,* Kama is represented as the Supreme Deity and Creator. In the Taitarîya Brahmana, he is the child of *Dharma*, the god of Law and Justice, of Sraddha and faith. In another account he springs from the heart of Brahmâ. Others show him born from water, i.e., from primordial chaos, or the "Deep". Hence one of his many names, *Irâ-ja*, "the water-born"; and *Aja*, "unborn" ; and *Atmabhu* or "Self-existent". Because of the sign of *Makara* (Capricornus) on his banner, he is also called "Makara Ketu". The allegory about Siva, the "Great Yogin ", reducing Kama to ashes by the fire from his *central* (or third) *Eye*, for inspiring the Mahadeva with thoughts of his wife, while he was at his devotions – is very suggestive, as it is said that he thereby reduced Kama to his primeval spiritual form.

Kamaloka (*Sk.*). The *semi*-material plane, to us subjective and invisible, where the disembodied "personalities", the astral forms, called *Kamarupa* remain, until they fade out from it by the complete exhaustion of the effects of the mental impulses that created these eidolons of human and animal passions and desires; (See "Kamarupa".) It is the Hades of the ancient Greeks and the Amenti of the Egyptians, the land of Silent Shadows; a division of the first group of the *Trailôkya.* (See "Kamadhâtu".)

Kamarupa (*Sk.*). Metaphysically, and in our esoteric philosophy, it is the subjective form created through the mental and physical desires and thoughts in connection with things of matter, by all sentient beings, a form which survives the death of their bodies. After that death three of the seven "principles" – or let us say planes of senses and consciousness on which the human instincts and ideation act in turn – viz., the body, its astral prototype and physical vitality, – being of no further use, remain on earth; the three higher principles, grouped into one, merge into the state of Devachan (*q.v.*), in which state the Higher Ego will remain until the hour for a new reincarnation arrives; and the *eidolon* of the ex-Personality is left alone in its new abode. Here, the pale copy of the man that was, vegetates for a period of time, the duration of which is variable and according to the element of materiality which is left in it, and which is determined by the past life of the defunct. Bereft as it is of its higher mind, spirit and physical senses, if left alone to its own senseless devices, it will gradually fade out and disintegrate. But, if forcibly drawn back into the terrestrial sphere whether by the passionate desires and appeals of the surviving friends or by regular necromantic practices – one of the most pernicious of which is medium-ship – the "spook" may prevail for a period greatly exceeding the span of the natural life of its body. Once the Kamarupa has learnt the way back to living human bodies, it becomes a vampire, feeding on the vitality of those who are so anxious for its company. In India these *eidolons* are called *Pisâchas,* and are much dreaded, as already explained elsewhere.

Kapila Rishi (*Sk.*). A great sage, a great adept of antiquity; the author of the Sankhya philosophy.

Karabtanos (*Gr.*). The spirit of blind or animal desire; the symbol of Kamarupa. The Spirit "without sense or judgment" in the Codex of the Nazarenes. He is the symbol of matter and stands for the father of the seven spirits of concupiscence begotten by him on his mother, the "Spiritus" or the Astral Light.

Kârana (*Sk.*). Cause (metaphysically).

Kârana Sarîra *(Sk.*). The "Causal body". It is dual in its meaning. Exoterically, it is Avidya, ignorance, or that which is the cause of the evolution of a human ego and its reincarnation ; hence the lower *Manas* esoterically – the causal body or Kâranopadhi stands in the Taraka Raja *yoga* as corresponding to *Buddhi* and the Higher "*Manas*," or Spiritual Soul.

Kâranopadhi (*Sk.*). The basis or *upadhi* of Karana, the "causal soul". In Taraka Raja*yoga*, it corresponds with both *Manas* and *Buddhi.* See Table in *The Secret Doctrine*, Vol. I, p. 157.

Karma (*Sk.*). Physically, action: metaphysically, the LAW OF RETRIBUTION, the Law of cause and effect or Ethical Causation. Nemesis, only in one sense, that of bad Karma. It is the eleventh *Nidana* in the concatenation of causes and effects in orthodox *Buddhi*sm ; yet it is the power that controls all things, the resultant of moral action, the meta physical *Samskâra*, or the moral effect of an act committed for the attainment of something which gratifies a personal desire. There is the Karma of merit and the Karma of demerit. Karma neither punishes nor rewards, it is simply *the one* Universal LAW which guides unerringly, and, so to say, blindly, all other laws productive of certain effects along the grooves of their respective causations. When *Buddhi*sm teaches that "Karma is that moral kernel (of any being) which alone survives death and continues in transmigration ' or reincarnation, it simply means that there remains nought after each Personality but the causes produced by it ; causes which are undying, i.e., which cannot be eliminated from the Universe until replaced by their legitimate effects, and wiped out by them, so to speak, and such causes – unless compensated during the life of the person who produced them with adequate effects, will follow the reincarnated Ego, and reach it in its subsequent reincarnation until a harmony between effects and causes is fully reestablished. No "personality" – a mere bundle of material atoms and of instinctual and mental characteristics – can of course continue, as such, in the world of pure Spirit. Only that which is immortal in its very nature and divine in its essence, namely, the Ego, can exist for ever. And as it is that Ego which chooses the personality it will inform, after each Devachan, and which receives through these personalities the effects of the Karmic causes produced, it is therefore the Ego, that *self* which is the "moral kernel" referred to and embodied karma, "which alone survives death."

Kartikeya (*Sk),* or *Kartika.* The Indian God of War, son of Siva, born of his seed fallen into the Ganges. He is also the personification of the power of

the *Logos*. The planet Mars. Kartika is a very occult personage, a nursling of the Pleiades, and a Kumâra. (See *Secret Doctrine.*)

Kasyapa (*Sk.*). A Vedic Sage; in the words of *Atharva Veda*, "The self-born who sprang from Time". Besides being the father of the Adityas headed by Indra, Kasyapa is also the progenitor of serpents, reptiles, birds and other walking, flying and creeping beings.

Kosmos (*Gr.*). The Universe, as distinguished from the world, which may mean our globe or earth.

Krishna (*Sk.*).. The most celebrated avatar of Vishnu, the "Saviour" of the Hindus and their most popular god. He is the eighth *Avatar*, the son of Devaki, and the nephew of Kansa, the Indian King Herod, who while seeking for him among the shepherds and cow-herds who concealed him, slew thousands of their newly-born babes. The story of Krishna's conception, birth, and childhood are the exact prototype of the New Testament story. The missionaries, of course, try to show that the Hindus stole the story of the Nativity from the early Christians who came to India.

Krita-Yuga *(Sk.*). The first of the four Yugas or Ages of the Brahmans; also called *Satya-Yuga*, a period lasting 1,728,000 years.

Kriyasakti (Gk.). The power of thought; one of the seven forces of Nature. Creative potency of the *Siddhis* (powers) of the full *Yogis*.

Kronos (*Gr.*). Saturn. The God of Boundless Time and of the Cycles.

Kshanti (*Sk.*). Patience, one of the *Paramîtas* of perfection.

Kshetrajna or *Kshetrajneswara* (*Sk.*). Embodied spirit, the Conscious Ego in its highest manifestations; the reincarnating Principle; the "Lord" in us.

Kumâra (*Sk.*). A virgin boy, or young celibate. The first Kumâras are the seven sons of Brahmâ born out of the limbs of the god, in the so-called ninth creation. It is stated that the name was given to them owing to their formal refusal to "procreate their species", and so they "remained *Yogis*", as the legend says.

Kundalini Sakti (*Sk.*). The power of life; one of the Forces of Nature; that power that generates a certain light in those who sit for spiritual and clairvoyant development. It is a power known only to those who practise concentration and *Yoga*.

L

Lanoo (*Sk.*). A disciple, the same as "*chela*".

Laya or *Layam* (*Sk.*). From the root *Li* "to dissolve, to disintegrate" a point of equilibrium (*zero-point*) in physics and chemistry. In occultism, that point where substance becomes homogeneous and is unable to act or differentiate.

Lha (*Tib.*). Spirits of the highest spheres, whence the name of Lhassa, the residence of the Dalaï-Lama. The title of Lha is often given in Tibet to some *Narjols* (Saints and Yogi adepts) who have attained great occult powers.

Lhamayin (*Tib.*). Elemental sprites of the lower terrestrial plane. Popular fancy makes of them demons and devils.

Linga or *Lingam* (*Sk.*). A sign or a symbol of abstract creation. Force becomes the organ of procreation only on this earth. In India there are 12 great Lingams of Siva, some of which are on mountains and rocks, and also in temples. Such is the *Kedâresa* in the Himalaya, a huge and shapeless mass of rock. In its origin the Lingam had never the gross meaning connected with the phallus, an idea which is altogether of a later date. The symbol in India has the same meaning which it had in Egypt, which is simply that the creative or procreative Force is divine. It also denotes who was the dual Creator – male and female, Siva and his Sakti. The gross and immodest idea connected with the phallus is not Indian but Greek and pre-eminently Jewish. The Biblical *Bethels* were real priapic stones, the "Beth-el" (phallus) wherein God dwells. The same symbol was concealed within the ark of the Covenant, the "Holy of Holies". Therefore the "Lingam" even as a phallus is not "a symbol of Siva" only, but that of every "Creator" or creative god in every nation, including the Israelites and their "God of Abraham and Jacob".

Linga Purâna (*Sk.*). A scripture of the Saivas or worshippers of Siva. Therein *Maheswara*, "the great Lord", concealed in the Agni Linga explains the ethics of life – duty, virtue, self-sacrifice and finally liberation by and through ascetic life at the end of the *Agni Kalpa* (the Seventh Round). As Professor Wilson justly observed "the Spirit of the worship (phallic) is as little influenced by the character of the type as can well be imagined. *There is nothing like the phallic orgies of antiquity; it is all mystical and spiritual.*"

Linga Sharîra (*Sk.*). The "body", i.e., the aerial symbol of the body. This term designates the *döppelganger* or the "astral body" of man or animal. It is the *eidolon* of the Greeks, the vital and *prototypal* body; the reflection of the men of flesh. It is born *before* and dies or fades out, with the disappearance of the last atom of the body.

Lipikas (*Sk.*). The celestial recorders, the "Scribes", those who record every word and deed, said or done by man while on this earth. As Occultism teaches, they are the agents of KARMA – the retributive Law.

Logos (*Gr.*). The manifested deity with every nation and people; the outward expression, or the effect of the cause which is ever concealed. Thus, speech is the *Logos* of thought; hence it is aptly translated by the "Verbum" and "Word" in its metaphysical sense.

Loka (*Sk.*). A region or circumscribed place. In metaphysics, a world or sphere or plane. The Purânas in India speak incessantly of seven and fourteen Lokas, above, and below our earth; of heavens and hells.

Lotus (*Gr.*). A most occult plant, sacred in Egypt, India and else where; called "the child of the Universe bearing the likeness of its mother in its bosom". There was a time "when the world was a golden lotus" (*padma*) says the allegory. A great variety of these plants, from the majestic Indian lotus, down to the marsh-lotus (bird's foot trefoil) and the Grecian "Dioscoridis", is eaten at Crete and other islands. It is a species of nymphala, first introduced from India to Egypt to which it was-not indigenous. See the text of *Archaic Symbolism* in the Appendix Viii. "The Lotus, as a Universal Symbol".

Lucifer (*Lat.*). The planet Venus, as the bright "Morning Star". Before Milton, Lucifer had never been a name of the Devil. Quite the reverse, since the Christian Saviour is made to say of himself in *Revelations* (xvi. 22.) "I am . . . the bright morning star" or Lucifer. One of the early Popes of Rome bore that name; and there was even a Christian sect in the fourth century which was called the *Luciferians.*

Lunar Pitris (Gods). Called in India the Fathers, "Pitris" or the lunar ancestors. They are subdivided, like the rest, into seven classes or Hierarchies, In Egypt although the moon received less worship than in Chaldea or India, still Isis stands as the representative of Luna-Lunus, "the celestial Hermaphrodite". Strange enough while the modern connect the moon only with lunacy and generation, the ancient nations, who knew better, have, individually and collectively, connected their "wisdom gods"

with it. Thus in Egypt the lunar gods are Thoth-Hermes and Chons; in India it is Budha, the Son of *Soma,* the moon; in Chaldea Nebo is the lunar god of Secret Wisdom, etc., etc. The wife of Thoth, *Sifix,* the lunar goddess, holds a pole with five rays or the five-pointed star, symbol of man, the Microcosm, in distinction from the Septenary Macrocosm. As in all theogonies a goddess precedes a god, on the principle most likely that the chick can hardly precede its egg, in Chaldea the moon was held as older and more venerable than the Sun, because, as they said, darkness precedes light at every periodical rebirth (or "creation") of the universe. Osiris although connected with the Sun and a Solar god is, nevertheless, born on Mount *Sinai*, because *Sin* is the Chaldeo-Assyrian word for the moon; so was Dio-Nysos, god of Nyssi or *Nisi,* which latter appelation was that of Sinai in Egypt, where it was called Mount Nissa. The *crescent* is not – as proven by many writers – an ensign of the Turks, but was adopted by Christians for their symbol before the Mahommedans. For ages the crescent was the emblem of the Chaldean Astarte, the Egyptian Isis, and the Greek Diana, all of them Queens of Heaven, and finally became the emblem of Mary the Virgin. "The Greek Christian Empire of Constantinople held it as their palladium. Upon the conquest by the Turks, the Sultan adopted it . . . and since that, the crescent has been made to oppose the idea of the *cross*". (*Eg. Belief.*)

M

Macrocosm (*Gr.*). The "Great Universe" literally, or Kosmos.

Macroprosopus (*Gr.*). A Kabalistic term, made of a compound Greek word: meaning the Vast or Great Countenance (See "Kabalistic Faces"); a title of Kether, the Crown, the highest Sephira. It is the name of the Universe, called *Arikh-Anpin*, the totality of that of which Microprosopus or *Zauir-Anpin* "the lesser countenance", is the part and antithesis. In its high or abstract metaphysical sense, Microprosopus is Adam Kadmon, the *vehicle of Ain-Suph*, and the crown of the Sephirothal Tree, though since Sephira and Adam Kadmon are in fact one under two aspects, it comes to the same thing. Interpretations are many, and they differ.

Madhyama (*Sk.*). Used of something beginningless and endless. Thus Vâch (Sound, the female *Logos*, or the female counterpart of Brahmâ is said to exist in several states, one of which is that of *Mâdhyama,* which is equivalent to saying that Vâch is *eternal* in one sense "the Word (Vâch) was with God, and *in* God", for the two are one.

Mâdhyamikas (Sk.). A sect mentioned in the *Vishnu Purâna*. Agreeably to the Orientalists, a "Buddhist sect, which is an anachronism. It was probably at first a sect of Hindu atheists. A later school of that name, teaching a system of sophistic nihilism, that reduces every proposition into a thesis and its antithesis, and then denies both, has been started in Tibet and China. It adopts a few principles of Nâgârjuna, who was one of the founders of the esoteric Mahayâna systems, not their *exoteric* travesties. The allegory that regarded Nâgârjuna's "Paramartha" as a gift from the *Nâgas* (Serpents) shows that he received his teachings from the secret school of adepts, and that the real tenets are therefore kept secret.

Mahâ *Buddhi* (*Sk.*). ***Mahat***. The Intelligent Soul of the World. The seven *Prakritis* or seven "natures" or planes, are counted from Mahâ*buddhi* downwards.

Mahâ Chohan (*Sk.*). The chief of a spiritual Hierarchy, or of a school of Occultism; the head of the trans-Himalayan mystics.

Mahâ Deva (*Sk.*). Lit., "great god"; a title of Siva.

Mahâ Guru (*Sk.*). Lit., "great teacher". The Initiator.

Mahâ Kâla (*Sk.*). "Great Time". A name of Siva as the "Destroyer", and of Vishnu as the "Preserver".

Mahâ Kalpa (*Sk.*). The "great age".

Mahâ Manvantara (*Sk.*). Lit., the great interludes between the "Manus". The period of universal activity. Manvantara implying here simply a period of activity, as opposed to Pra*laya*, or rest – without reference to the length of the cycle.

Mahâ Mâyâ (*Sk.*). The great illusion of manifestation. This universe, and all in it in their mutual relation, is called the great Illusion or *Mahâmâyâ* It is also the usual title given to Gautama the Buddha's Immaculate Mother – Mayâdêvi, or the "Great Mystery", as she is called by the Mystics.

Mahâ Pra*laya* (*Sk.*). The opposite of Mahâmanvantara, literally "the great Dissolution", the "Night" following the "Day of Brahmâ". It is the great rest and sleep of all nature after a period of active manifestation; orthodox Christians would refer to it as the "Destruction of the World".

Mahâ Vidyâ (*Sk.*). The great esoteric science. The highest Initiates alone are in possession of this science, which embraces almost universal knowledge.

Mahâ Yogin (*Sk.*). The "great ascetic". A title of Siva.

Mahâ Yuga (*Sk.*). The aggregate of four *Yugas* or ages, of 4,320,000 solar years; a "Day of Brahmâ", in the Brahmanical system ; lit., "the great age".

Mahat (*Sk.*). Lit., "The great one". The first principle of Universal Intelligence and Consciousness. In the Purânic philosophy the first product of root-nature or *Pradhâna* (the same as Mula*prakriti*); the producer of *Manas* the thinking principle, and of *Ahankâra*, egotism or the feeling of "I am I" (in the lower *Manas*).

Mahâtma. Lit., "great soul". An adept of the highest order. Exalted beings who, having attained to the mastery over their lower principles are thus living unimpeded by the "man of flesh", and are in possession of knowledge and power commensurate with the stage they have reached in their spiritual evolution. Called in Pali Rahats and Arhats.

Maitreya Buddha (*Sk.*). The same as the *Kalki Avatar* of Vishnu (the "White Horse" *Avatar*), and of Sosiosh and other Messiahs. The only difference lies in the dates of their appearances. Thus, while Vishnu is expected to appear on his white horse at the end of the present *Kali Yuga* age "for the final destruction of the wicked, the renovation of creation and the restoration of purity", Maitreya is expected earlier. Exoteric or popular teaching making slight variations on the esoteric doctrine states that Sakyamuni (Gautama Buddha) visited him in Tushita (a celestial abode) and commissioned him to issue thence on earth as his successor at the expiration of five thousand years after his (Buddha's) death. This would be in less than 3,000 years hence. Esoteric philosophy teaches that the next Buddha will appear during the seventh (sub) race of this Round. The fact is that Maitreya was a follower of Buddha, a well-known Arhat, though not his direct disciple, and that he was the founder of an esoteric philosophical school. As shown by Eitel (*Sanskrit-Chinese Dict.*), "statues were erected in his honour as early as B.C. 350".

Manas (*Sk.*). Lit., "the mind", the mental faculty which makes of man an intelligent and moral being, and distinguishes him from the mere animal; a synonym of *Mahat*. *Esoterically,* however, it means, when unqualified, the Higher EGO, or the sentient reincarnating Principle in man. When qualified it is called by Theosophists *Buddhi-Manas* or the Spiritual Soul in contradistinction to its human reflection – *Kâma-Manas.*

***Manas*, Kâma** (*Sk.*). Lit., "the mind of desire." With the Buddhists it is the *sixth* of the Chadâyatana *(q.v.),* or the six organs of knowledge, hence the

highest of these, synthesized by the seventh called *Klichta*, the spiritual perception of that which defiles this (lower) *Manas*, or the "Human-animal Soul", as the Occultists term it. While the Higher *Manas* or the Ego is directly related to *Vijnâna* (the 10th of the 12 Nidânas) – which is the perfect knowledge of all forms of knowledge, whether relating to object or subject in the nidânic concatenation of causes and effects; the lower, the Kâma *Manas* is but one of the *Indriya* or organs (roots) of Sense. Very little can be said of the dual *Manas* here, as the doctrine that treats of it, is correctly stated only in esoteric works. Its mention can thus be only very superficial.

***Manas* Sanyama** (*Sk.*). Perfect concentration of the mind, and control over it, during *Yoga* practices.

***Manas* Taijasi** (*Sk.*). Lit., the "radiant" *Manas*; a state of the Higher Ego, which only high metaphysicians are able to realize and comprehend.

Mânasa or *Manaswin* (*Sk.*). "The efflux of the *divine* mind," and explained as meaning that this efflux signifies the *manasa* or divine sons of Brahmâ-Virâj. Nilakantha who is the authority for this statement, further explains the term "*manas*a" by *manomâtrasarira*. These *Manas*a are the *Arupa* or incorporeal sons of the Prajâpati Virâj, in another version. But as Arjuna Misra identifies Virâj with Brahmâ, and as Brahmâ is Mahat, the universal mind, the exoteric blind becomes plain. The Pitris are identical with the Kumâra, the Vairaja, the *Manas*a-Putra (mind sons), and are finally identified with the human "Egos".

Mânasa Dhyânis (*Sk.*). The highest Pitris in the *Purânas*; the Agnishwatthas, or Solar Ancestors of Man, those who made of Man a rational being, by incarnating in the senseless forms of semi-ethereal flesh of the men of the third race. (See Vol. II. of *Secret Doctrine*.)

Mânasas (*Sk.*). Those who endowed humanity with *manas* or intelligence, the immortal EGOS in men. (See "*Manas*".)

Mantrika Sakti (*Sk.*). The power, or the occult potency of mystic words, sounds, numbers or letters in these Mantras.

Manus (*Sk.*). The fourteen Manus are the patrons or guardians of the race cycles in a Manvantara, or Day of Brahmâ. The primeval Manus are seven, they become fourteen in the *Purânas.*

Manushi or *Manushi Buddhas (Sk.)*. Human Buddhas, Bodhis*attva*s, or incarnated Dhyan Chohans.

Manvantara (*Sk.*). A period of manifestation, as opposed to Pra*laya* (dissolution, or rest), applied to various cycles, especially to a Day of Brahmâ, 4,320,000,000 Solar years – and to the reign of one Manu – 308,448,000. (See Vol. II. of *The Secret Doctrine*, p. 68 *et. seq*.) Lit., *Manuantara* – between Manus.

Mârga (*Sk.*). "The "Path", The *Ashthânga mârga*, the "holy" or sacred path is the one that leads to Nirvâna. The eight-fold path has grown out of the seven-fold path, by the addition of the (now) first of the eight Marga; *i.e.*, "the possession of orthodox views"; with which a *real Yogâcharya* would have nothing to do.

Mârttanda (*Sk.*). The Vedic name of the Sun.

Mâyâ *(Sk.)*. Illusion ; the cosmic power which renders phenomenal existence and the perceptions thereof possible. In Hindu philosophy that alone which is changeless and eternal is called *reality* ; all that which is subject to change through decay and differentiation and which has therefore a begining and an end is regarded as *mâyâ* – illusion.

Mîmânsâ (*Sk.*). A school of philosophy; one of the six in India. There are two Mîmânsâ the older and the younger. The first, the "Pârva-Mîmânsâ", was founded by Jamini, and the later or "Uttara Mîmânsâ", by a Vyasa— and is now called the Vedânta school. Sankarâchârya was the most prominent apostle of the latter. The Vedânta school is the oldest of all the six *Darshana* (lit., "demonstrations"), but even to the Pûrva-Mîmânsâ no higher antiquity is allowed than 500 B.C. Orientalists in favour of the absurd idea that all these schools are "due to Greek influence", in order to have them fit their theory would make them of still later date. The *Shad-darshana* (or Six Demonstrations) have all a starting point in common, and maintain that *ex nihilo nihil fit*.

Moksha (*Sk.*). "Liberation." The same as Nirvâna; a post mortem state of rest and bliss of the "Soul-Pilgrim".

Monad (*Gr.*). The Unity, the *one* ; but in Occultism it often means the unified triad, Atma-*Buddhi-Manas*, or the duad, Atma-*Buddhi*, that immortal part of man which reincarnates in the lower kingdoms, and gradually progresses through them to Man and then to the final goal – Nirvâna.

Monas (*Gr.*). The same as the term *Monad* ; "Alone", a unit. In the Pythagorean system the duad emanates from the higher and solitary Monas, which is thus the "First Cause".

Moon. The earth's satellite has figured very largely as an emblem in the religions of antiquity; and most commonly has been represented as Female, but this is not universal, for in the myths of the Teutons and Arabs, as well as in the conception of the Rajpoots of India (see Tod, *Hist*.), and in Tartary the moon was male. Latin authors speak of Luna. and also of Lunus, but with extreme rarity. The Greek name is Selene, the Hebrew Lebanah and also Yarcah. In Egypt the moon was associated with Isis, in Phenicia with Astarte and in Babylon with Ishtar. From certain points of view the ancients regarded the moon also as Androgyne. The astrologers allot an Influence to the moon over the several parts of a man, according to the several Zodiacal signs she traverses; as well as a special influence produced by the house she occupies in a figure.

The division of the Zodiac into the 28 mansions of the moon appears to be older than that into 12 signs: the Copts, Egyptians, Arabs, Persians and Hindoos used the division into 28 parts centuries ago, and the Chinese use it still.

The Hermetists said the moon gave man an astral form, while Theosophy teaches that the Lunar Pitris were the creators of our human bodies and lower principles. (See *Secret Doctrine* 1. 386.) [w.w.w.]

Mukta and **Mukti** *(Sk.*). Liberation from sentient life; one beatified or liberated; a candidate for *Moksha*, freedom from flesh and matter, or life on this earth.

Mûla*prakriti* (*Sk.*). The Parabrahmic root, the abstract deific feminine principle—undifferentiated substance. Akâsa. Literally, "the root of Nature" (*Prakriti*) or Matter.

Munis (*Sk.*). Saints, or Sages.

Mysteries. Greek *teletai*, or finishings, celebrations of initiation or the Mysteries. They were observances, generally kept secret from the profane and uninitiated, in which were taught by dramatic representation and other methods, the origin of things, the nature of the human spirit, its relation to the body, and the method of its purification and restoration to higher life. Physical science, medicine, the laws of music, divination, were all taught in the same manner. The Hippocratic oath was but a mystic

obligation. Hippocrates was a priest of Asklepios, some of whose writings chanced to become public. But the Asklepiades were initiates of the Æsculapian serpent-worship, as the Bacchantes were of the Dionysia; and both rites were eventually incorporated with the Eleusinia. The Sacred Mysteries were enacted in the ancient Temples by the initiated Hierophants for the benefit and instruction of the candidates. The most solemn and occult Mysteries were certainly those which were performed in Egypt by "the band of secret-keepers", as Mr. Bonwick calls the Hierophants. Maurice describes their nature very graphically in a few lines. Speaking of the Mysteries performed in Philæ (the Nile-island), he says that "it was in these gloomy caverns that the grand and mystic arcana of the goddess (Isis) were unfolded to the adoring aspirant, while the solemn hymn of initiation resounded through the long extent of these stony recesses". The word "mysteries" is derived from the Greek *muô*, "to close the mouth", and every symbol connected with them had, a hidden meaning. As Plato and many other sages of antiquity affirm, the Mysteries were highly religious, moral and beneficent as a school of ethics. The Grecian mysteries, those of Ceres and Bacchus, were only imitations of the Egyptian; and the author of *Egyptian Belief and Modern Thought*, informs us that our own "word *chapel* or *capella* is said to be the *Caph-El* or college of *El*, the Solar divinity". The well-known *Kabiri* are associated with the Mysteries. In short, the Mysteries were in every country a series of dramatic performances, in which the mysteries of cosmogony and nature, in general, were personified by the priests and neophytes, who enacted the part of various gods and goddesses, repeating supposed scenes (allegories) from their respective lives. These were explained in their hidden meaning to the candidates for initiation, and incorporated into philosophical doctrines.

N

Nâga (*Sk.*). Literally "Serpent". The name in the Indian Pantheon of the Serpent or Dragon Spirits, and of the inhabitants of Pâtâla, hell. But as Pâtâla means the *antipodes*, and was the name given to America by the ancients, who knew and visited that continent before Europe had ever heard of it, the term is probably akin to the Mexican Nagals the (now) sorcerers and medicine men. The Nagas are the Burmese *Nats*, serpent-gods, or "dragon demons". In Esotericism, however, and as already stated, this is a nick-name for the "wise men" or adepts in China and Tibet, the "Dragons." are regarded as the titulary deities of the world, and of various spots on the earth, and the word is explained as meaning adepts, *yogis*,

and narjols. The term has simply reference to their great knowledge and wisdom. This is also proven in the ancient Sûtras and Buddha's biographies. The Nâga is ever a wise man, endowed with extraordinary magic powers, in South and Central America as in India, in Chaldea as also in ancient Egypt. In China the "worship" of the Nâgas was widespread, and it has become still more pronounced since Nâgarjuna (the "great Nâga", the "great adept" literally), the fourteenth Buddhist patriarch, visited China. The "Nâgas" are regarded by the Celestials as "the tutelary Spirits or gods of the five regions or the four points of the compass and the centre, as the guardians of the five lakes and four oceans" (**Eitel**). This, traced to its origin and translated esoterically, means that the five continents and their five root-races had always been under the guardianship of "terrestrial deities", i.e., Wise Adepts. The tradition that Nâgas washed Gautama Buddha at his birth, protected him and guarded the relics of his body when dead, points again to the Nâgas being only wise men, Arhats, and no monsters or Dragons. This is also corroborated by the innumerable stories of the conversion of Nâgas to *Buddhi*sm. The Nâga of a lake in a forest near Râjagriha and many other "Dragons" were thus converted by Buddha to the good Law.

Nârada (*Sk.*). One of the Seven great Rishis, a Son of Brahmâ This "Progenitor" is one of the most mysterious personages in the Brahmanical sacred symbology. Esoterically Nârada is the Ruler of events during various Karmic cycles, and the personification, in a certain sense, of the great human cycle; a Dhyan Chohan. He plays a great part in Brahmanism, which ascribes to him some of the most occult hymns in the *Rig Veda*, in which sacred work he is described as "of the Kanwa family". He is called Deva-Brahmâ, but as such has a distinct character from the one he assumes on earth – or Pâtâla. Daksha cursed him for his interference with his 5,000 and 10,000 sons, whom he persuaded to remain Yogins and *celibates*, to be reborn time after time on this earth (*Mahâbhârata*). But this is an allegory. He was the inventor of the Vina, a kind of lute, and a great "lawgiver". The story is too long to be given here.

Nârâyana (*Sk.*). The "mover on the Waters" of space: a title of Vishnu, in his aspect of the Holy Spirit, moving on the Waters of Creation. (See *Mânu,* Book II.) In esoteric symbology it stands for the primeval manifestation of the *life-principle,* spreading in infinite Space.

Nâstika (*Sk.*). Atheist, or rather he who does not worship or recognize the gods and idols.

Nephesh (*Heb.*). Breath of life. *Anima, Mens, Vita,* Appetites. This term is used very loosely in the Bible. It generally means *prana* "life"; in the *Kabbalah* it is the animal passions and the animal Soul. [w.w.w.]. Therefore, as maintained in theosophical teachings, *Nephesh* is the synonym of the Prâna-Kâmic Principle, or the vital animal Soul in man. [H. P. B.]

Nidâna (*Sk.*). The 12 causes of existence, or a chain of causation, "a concatenation of cause and effect in the whole range of existence through 12 links". This is the fundamental dogma of Buddhist thought, "the understanding of which solves the riddle of life, revealing the insanity of existence and preparing the mind for Nirvâna". (Eitel's *Sans. Chin. Dict.*) The 12 links stand thus in their enumeration. (1) Jail, or birth, according to one of the four modes of entering the stream of life and reincarnation – or *Chatur Yoni (q.v.*), each mode placing the being born in one of the six *Gâti* (q.v.). (2) *Jarârnarana,* or decrepitude and death, following the maturity of the *Skandhas* (q.v.). (3) *Bhava,* the Karmic agent which leads every new sentient being to be born in this or another mode of existence in the *Trailokya* and Gâti. (4) *Upâdâna,* the creative cause of *Bhava* which thus becomes the cause of *Jati* which is the effect; and this creative cause is the *clinging to life.* (5) Trishnâ, love, whether pure or impure. (6) *Vêdâna,* or sensation; perception by the senses, it is the 5th Skandha. (7) Sparsa, the sense of touch. (8) *Chadâyatana,* the organs of sensation. (9) *Nâmarûpa,* personality, i.e., a form with a name to it, the symbol of the unreality of material phenomenal appearances. (10) *Vijnâna,* the perfect knowledge of every perceptible thing and of all objects in their concatenation and unity. (11) *Samskâra,* action on the plane of illusion. (12) *Avidyâ,* lack of true perception, or ignorance. The Nidânas belonging to the most subtle and abstruse doctrines of the Eastern metaphysical system, it is impossible to go into the subject at any greater length.

Nimitta (*Sk.*). 1. An interior illumination developed by the practice of meditation. 2. The efficient spiritual cause, as contrasted with Upadana, the material cause, in Vedânta philosophy. See also *Pradhâna* in Sankhya philosophy.

Nirguna (*Sk.*). Negative attribute; unbound, or without *Gunas* (attributes), i.e., that which is devoid of all qualities, the opposite of Saguna, that which has attributes (*Secret Doctrine,* II. 95), e.g., Parabrahmam is Nirguna; Brahmâ, Saguna. Nirguna is a term which shows the impersonality of the thing spoken of.

Nirmânakâya (*Sk.*). Something entirely different in esoteric philosophy from the popular meaning attached to it, and from the fancies of the Orientalists. Some call the *Nirmânakâya* body "Nirvana with remains" (Schlagintweit, etc.) on the supposition, probably, that it is a kind of Nirvânic condition during which consciousness and form are retained. Others say that it is one of the *Trikâya* (three bodies), with the "power of assuming any form of appearance in order to propagate *Buddhi*sm" (Eitel's idea); again, that "it is the incarnate avatâra of a deity" (*ibid.*), and so on. Occultism, on the other hand, says:that Nirmânakâya, although meaning literally a transformed "body", is a state. The form is that of the adept or yogi who enters, or chooses, that *post mortem* condition in preference to the *Dharma*kâya or *absolute* Nirvânic state. He does this because the latter *kâya* separates him for ever from the world of form, conferring upon him a state of *selfish* bliss, in which no other living being can participate, the adept being thus precluded from the possibility of helping humanity, or even *devas*. As a Nirmânakâya, however, the man leaves behind him only his physical body, and retains every other "principle" save the Kamic – for he has crushed this out for ever from his nature, during life, and it can never resurrect in his post mortem state. Thus, instead of going into selfish bliss, he chooses a life of self-sacrifice, an existence which ends only with the life-cycle, in order to be enabled to help mankind in an invisible yet most effective manner. (See *The Voice of the Silence*, third treatise, "The Seven Portals".) Thus a Nirmânakâya is not, as popularly believed, the body "in which a Buddha or a Bodhi*sattva* appears on earth", but verily one, who whether a *Chutuktu* or a *Khubilkhan,* an adept or a yogi during life, has since become a member of that invisible Host which ever protects and watches over Humanity within Karmic limits. Mistaken often for a "Spirit", a Deva, God himself, &c., a Nirmânakâya is ever a protecting, compassionate, verily a *guardian* angel, to him who becomes worthy of his help. Whatever objection may be brought forward against this doctrine; however much it is denied, because, forsooth, it has never been hitherto made public in Europe and therefore since it is unknown to Orientalists, it must needs be "a myth of modern invention" – no one will be bold enough to say that this idea of helping suffering mankind at the price of one's own almost interminable self-sacrifice, is not one of the grandest and noblest that was ever evolved from human brain.

Nirupadhi *(Sk.*). Attributeless; the negation of attributes.

Nirvâna (*Sk.*). According to the Orientalists, the entire "blowing out", like the flame of a candle, the utter extinction of existence. But in the esoteric

explanations it is the state of absolute existence and absolute consciousness, into which the Ego of a man who has reached the highest degree of perfection and holiness during life goes, after the body dies, and occasionally, as in the case of Gautama Buddha and others, during life. (See "Nirvânî".)

Nirvânî (ee) (Sk.). One who has attained Nirvana – an emancipated soul. That Nirvâna means nothing of the kind asserted by Orientalists every scholar who has visited China, India and Japan is well aware. It is "*escape* from misery" but only from that of matter, freedom from *Klêsha*, or *Kâma*, and the complete extinction of animal desires. If we are told that *Abidharma* defines Nirvâna "as a state of absolute annihilation", we concur, adding to the last word the qualification "of everything connected with matter or the physical world", and this simply because the latter (as also all in it) is illusion, *mâyâ*. Sâkya-mûni Buddha said in the last moments of his life that "the spiritual body is immortal" (See *Sans. Chin. Dict.*). As Mr. Eitel, the scholarly Sinologist, explains it: "The popular exoteric systems agree in defining Nirvâna *negatively* as a state of absolute exemption from the circle of transmigration; as a state of entire freedom from all forms of existence; to begin with, freedom from all passion and exertion; a state of indifference to all sensibility" and he might have added "death of all compassion for the world of suffering". And this is why the Bodhi*sattva*s who prefer the Nirmânakâya to the *Dharma*kâya vesture, stand higher in the popular estimation than the Nirvânîs. But the same scholar adds that: "Positively (and esoterically) they define Nirvâna as the highest state of spiritual bliss, as absolute immortality through absorption of the soul (spirit rather) into itself, but *preserving individuality* so that, e.g., Buddhas, after entering Nirvâna, may reappear on earth" – i.e., in the future Manvantara.

Nitya Pra*laya* (*Sk.*). Lit., "perpetual" Pra*laya* or dissolution. It is the constant and imperceptible changes undergone by the atoms which last as long as a Mahâmanvantara, a whole age of Brahmâ, which takes fifteen figures to sum up. A stage of chronic change and dissolution, the stages of growth and decay. It is the duration of "Seven Eternities". (See *Secret Doctrine* I. 371, II. 69, 310.) There are four kinds of Pra*laya*s, or states of changelessness. The Naimittika, when Brahmâ slumbers; the *Prakriti*ka, a partial Pra*laya* of anything during Manvantara; Atyantika, when man has identified himself with the One Absolute synonym of Nirvâna; and Nitya, for physical things especially, as a state of profound and dreamless sleep.

Nitya Sarga (*Sk.*). The state of constant creation or evolution, as opposed to *Nitya Pralaya*—the state of perpetual incessant dissolution (or change of atoms) disintegration of molecules, hence change of forms.

Nous (*Gr.*). A Platonic term for the Higher Mind or Soul. It means Spirit as distinct from animal Soul – *psyche*; divine consciousness or mind in man: *Nous* was the designation given to the Supreme deity (third *logos*) by Anaxagoras. Taken from Egypt where it was called *Nout*, it was adopted by the Gnostics for their first conscious Æon which, with the Occultists, is the third *logos*, cosmically, and the third "principle" (from above) or *manas*, in man. (See "Nout".)

Nout (*Gr.*). In the Pantheon of the Egyptians it meant the "One-only-One", because they did not proceed in their popular or exoteric religion higher than the third manifestation which radiates from the *Unknown* and the *Unknowable*, the first unmanifested and the second *logoi* in the esoteric philosophy of every nation. The Nous of Anaxagoras was the *Mahat* of the Hindu Brahmâ, *the first manifested* Deity – "the Mind or Spirit self-potent"; this creative Principle being of course the *primum mobile* of everything in the Universe – its Soul and Ideation. (See "Seven Principles" in man.)

Nyâya (Sk.). One of the six *Darshanas* or schools of Philosophy in India; a system of Hindu logic founded by the Rishi Gautama.

O

Occult Sciences. The science of the secrets of nature – physical and psychic, mental and spiritual; called Hermetic and Esoteric Sciences. In the West, the *Kabbalah* may be named; in the East, mysticism, magic, and *Yoga* philosophy, which latter is often referred to by the Chelas in India as the *seventh* "Darshana" (school of philosophy), there being only *six* Darshanas in India known to the world of the profane. These sciences are, and have been for ages, hidden from the vulgar for the very good reason that they would never be appreciated by the selfish educated classes, nor understood by the uneducated; whilst the former might misuse them for their own profit, and thus turn the divine science into *black magic*. It is often brought forward as an accusation against the Esoteric philosophy and the *Kabbalah* that their literature is full of "a barbarous and meaningless jargon" unintelligible to the ordinary mind. But do not exact Sciences – medicine, physiology, chemistry, and the rest – do the same? Do not official Scientists equally veil their facts and discoveries with a newly coined and most barbarous Græco-Latin terminology? As justly remarked

by our late brother, Kenneth Mackenzie – "To juggle thus with words, when the facts are so simple, is the art of the Scientists of the present time, in striking contrast to those of the XVIIth century, who called spades spades, and not 'agricultural implements'." Moreover, whilst their facts would be as simple and as comprehensible if rendered in ordinary language, the facts of Occult Science are of so abstruse a nature, that in most cases no words exist in European languages to express them; in addition to which our "jargon" is a *double* necessity – (a) for the purpose of describing clearly these *facts* to him who is versed in the Occult terminology; and (b) to conceal them from the profane.

Occultist. One who studies the various branches of occult science. The term is used by the French Kabbalists (See Eliphas Lévi's works). Occultism embraces the whole range of psychological, physiological, cosmical, physical, and spiritual phenomena. From the word occultus hidden or secret. It therefore applies to the study of the ***Kabbalah***, astrology, alchemy, and all arcane sciences.

Oeaihu, or *Oeaihwu.* The manner of pronunciation depends on the accent. This is an esoteric term for the six in one or the mystic seven. The occult name for the "seven vowelled" ever-present manifestation of the Universal Principle.

Om or Aum (*Sk.*). A mystic syllable, the most solemn of all words in India. It is "an invocation, a benediction, an affirmation and a promise and it is so sacred, as to be indeed *the word at low breath* of occult, *primitive* masonry. No one must be near when the syllable is pronounced for a purpose. This word is usually placed at the beginning of sacred Scriptures, and is prefixed to prayers. It is a compound of three letters a,u,m, which, in the popular belief, are typical of the three *Vedas*, also of three gods—**A** (Agni) **V** (Varuna) and **M** (Maruts) or Fire, Water and Air. In esoteric philosophy these are the three sacred fires, or the "triple fire"in the Universe and Man, besides many other things. Occultly, this "triple fire" represents the highest *Tetraktys* also, as it is typified by the Agni named Abhimânin and his transformation into his three sons, Pâvana, Pavamâna and Suchi, "who drinks up water", i.e., destroys material desires. This monosyllable is called Udgîtta, and is sacred with both Brahmins and Buddhists.

Omkâra (Sk.). The same as Aum or Om. It is also the name of one of the twelve *lingams,* that was represented by a secret and most sacred shrine at Ujjain—no longer existing, since the time of *Buddhi*sm.

Ophiomorphos (*Gr.*). The same, but in its material aspect, as the Ophis-Christos. With the Gnostics the Serpent represented "Wisdom in Eternity".

Ouranos (*Gr.*). The whole expanse of Heaven called the "Waters of Space", the Celestial Ocean, etc. The name very likely comes from the Vedic Varuna, personified as the water god and regarded as the chief Aditya among the seven planetary deities. In Hesiod's Theogony, Ouranos (or Uranus) is the same as Cœlus (Heaven) the oldest of all the gods and the father of the divine Titans.

P

Padma Âsana (*Sk.*). A posture prescribed to and practised by some *Yogis* for developing concentration.

Padma Kalpa (*Sk.*). The name of the last Kalpa or the preceding Manvantara, which was a year of Brahmâ.

Pancha Kosha (*Sk.*). The five "sheaths". According to Vedantin philosophy, Vijnânamaya Kosha, the fourth sheath, is composed of *Buddhi*, or is *Buddhi*. The five sheaths are said to belong to the two higher principles—*Jivâtma* and *Sâkshi*, which represent the *Upathita* and *An-upahita,* divine spirit respectively. The division in the esoteric teaching differs from this, as it divides man's physical-metaphysical aspect into seven principles.

Para (*Sk.*). "Infinite" and "supreme" in philosophy – the final limit.

Parabrahm (*Sk.*). "Beyond Brahmâ", literally. The Supreme Infinite Brahma, "Absolute" – the attributeless, the secondless reality. The impersonal and nameless universal Principle.

Paracelsus. The symbolical name adopted by the greatest Occultist of the middle ages – Philip Bombastes Aureolus Theophrastus von Hohenheim – born in the canton of Zurich in 1493. He was the cleverest physician of his age, and the most renowned for curing almost any illness by the power of talismans prepared by himself. He never had a friend, but was surrounded by enemies, the most bitter of whom were the Churchmen and their party. That he was accused of being in league with the devil stands to reason, nor is it to be wondered at that finally he was murdered by some unknown foe, at the early age of forty-eight. He died at Salzburg, leaving a number of works behind him, which are to this day greatly valued by the Kabbalists and Occultists. Many of his utterances have proved prophetic. He was a clairvoyant of great powers, one of the most learned and erudite

philosophers and mystics, and a distinguished Alchemist. Physics is indebted to him for the discovery of nitrogen gas, or **Azote.**

Paramapadha (*Sk.*). The place where—according to Visishtadwaita Vedantins—bliss is enjoyed by those who reach *Moksha* (Bliss). This "place" is not material but made, says the Catechism of that sect, "of *Suddhasatwa*, the essence of which the body of Iswara", the lord, "is made".

Paramartha (*Sk*) Absolute existence.

Paramâtman (*Sk.*). The Supreme Soul of the Universe.

Paranirvâna (*Sk.*). Absolute *Non-Being*, which is equivalent to absolute *Being* or "Be-ness", the state reached by the human Monad at the end of the great cycle (See *Secret Doctrine* I, 135). The same as *Paraniskpanna*.

Pâtanjala (*Sk.*). The *Yoga* philosophy; one of the six *Darshanas* or Schools of India.

Patanjali (*Sk.*). The founder of the *Yoga* philosophy. The date assigned to him by the Orientalists is 200 B.C.; and by the Occultists nearer to 700 than 600 B.C. At any rate he was a contemporary of Pânini.

Personality. In Occultism – which divides man into seven principles, considering him under the three aspects of the *divine*, the *thinking* or the *rational*, and the *animal* man – the lower *quaternary* or the purely astrophysical being; while by *Individuality* is meant the Higher Triad, considered as a Unity. Thus the *Personality* embraces all the characteristics and memories of one physical life, while the *Individuality* is the imperishable *Ego* which re-incarnates and clothes itself in one personality after another.

Phenomenon (*Gr.*). In reality "an appearance", something previously unseen, and puzzling when the cause of it is unknown. Leaving aside various kinds of phenomena, such as cosmic, electrical, chemical, etc., and holding merely to the phenomena of spiritism, let it be remembered that theosophically and esoterically every "miracle" – from the biblical to the theumaturgic – is simply a phenomenon, but that no phenomenon is ever a miracle, *i.e.*, something supernatural or outside of the laws of nature, as all such are impossibilities in nature.

Pitar Devata (*Sk.*). The "Father-Gods", the lunar ancestors of mankind.

Pitaras (*Sk.*). Fathers, Ancestors. The fathers of the human races.

Pitris (*Sk.*). The ancestors, or creators of mankind. They are of seven classes, three of which are incorporeal, *arupa,* and four corporeal. In popular theology they are said to be created from Brahmâ's side. They are variously genealogized, but in esoteric philosophy they are as given in *The Secret Doctrine*. In *Isis Unveiled* it is said of them "It is generally believed that the Hindu term means the spirits of our ancestors, of disembodied people, hence the argument of some Spiritualists that fakirs (and *yogis*) and other Eastern wonder-workers, are *mediums*. This is in more than one sense erroneous. The Pitris are not the ancestors of the present living men, but those of the human kind, or Adamic races; the spirits of human races, which on the great scale of descending evolution *preceded our races* of men, and they *were physically, as well as spiritually, far superior* to our modern pigmies. In *Mânava Dharma Shâstra* they are called the *Lunar Ancestors*." *The Secret Doctrine* has now explained that which was cautiously put forward in the earlier Theosophical volumes.

Planetary Spirits. Primarily the rulers or governors of the planets. As our earth has its hierarchy of terrestrial planetary spirits, from the highest to the lowest plane, so has every other heavenly body. In Occultism, however, the term "Planetary Spirit" is generally applied only to the seven highest hierarchies corresponding to the Christian archangels. These have all passed through a stage of evolution corresponding to the humanity of earth on other worlds, in long past cycles. Our earth, being as yet only in its fourth round, is far too young to have produced high planetary spirits. The highest planetary spirit ruling over any globe is in reality the "Personal God" of that planet and far more truly its "over-ruling providence" than the self-contradictory Infinite Personal Deity of modern Churchianity.

Plato. An Initiate into the Mysteries and the greatest Greek philosopher, whose writings are known the world over. He was the pupil of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle. He flourished over 400 years before our era.

Pragna (*Sk.*) or *Prajna*. A synonym of *Mahat* the Universal Mind. The capacity for perception. (*S. D.*, I. 139) Consciousness.

Prajâpatis (*Sk.*). Progenitors; the givers of life to all on this Earth. They are seven and then ten – corresponding to the seven and ten Kabbalistic Sephiroth; to the Mazdean Amesha-Spentas, &c. Brahmâ the creator, is called Prajâpati as the synthesis of the Lords of Being.

Prakriti (*Sk.*). Nature in general, nature as opposed to *Purusha* – spiritual nature and Spirit, which together are the "two primeval aspects of the One Unknown Deity". (*Secret Doctrine,* I. 51.)

Pralaya (*Sk.*). A period of obscuration or repose – planetary, cosmic or universal – the opposite of Manvantara *(S. D.,* I. 370.).

Pramantha (*Sk.*). An accessory to producing the sacred fire by friction. The sticks used by Brahmins to kindle fire by friction.

Prâna (*Sk.*). Life-Principle ; the breath of Life.

Pranidhâna (*Sk.*). The fifth observance of the *Yogis*; ceaseless devotion. (See *Yoga Shâstras*, ii. 32.)

Pratyasarga (*Sk.*). In Sankhya philosophy the "intellectual evolution of the Universe" ; in the *Purânas* the 8th creation.

Prometheus (*Gr.*). The Greek *logos*; he, who by bringing on earth divine fire (intelligence and consciousness) endowed men with reason and mind. Prometheus is the Hellenic type of our Kumâras or *Egos,* those who, by incarnating in men, made of them latent gods instead of animals. The gods (or Elohim) were averse to men becoming "as one of us (*Genesis* iii., 22), and knowing "good and evil". Hence we see these gods in every religious legend punishing man for his desire to know. As the Greek myth has it, for stealing the fire he brought to men from Heaven, Prometheus was chained by the order of Zeus to a crag of the Caucasian Mountains.

Protogonos (*Gr.*). The "first-born"; used of all the manifested gods and of the Sun in our system.

Psyche (*Gr.*). The animal, terrestrial Soul; the lower *Manas*.

Purânas (*Sk.*). Lit., "ancient". A collection of symbolical and allegorical writings – eighteen in number now – supposed to have been composed by Vyâsa, the author of *Mahâbhârata*.

Purusha (*Sk.*). "Man", *heavenly man*. Spirit, the same as Nârâyana in another aspect.
"The Spiritual Self."

Pymander (Gr.). The "Thought divine". The Egyptian Prometheus and the personified Nous or divine light, which appears to and instructs Hermes Trismegistus, in a hermetic work called "Pymander".

Pythagoras (*Gr.*). The most famous of mystic philosophers, born at Samos, about 586 B.C. He seems to have travelled all over the world, and to have culled his philosophy from the various systems to which he had access. Thus, he studied the esoteric sciences with the *Brachmanes* of India, and astronomy and astrology in Chaldea and Egypt. He is known to this day in the former country under the name of Yavanâchârya ("Ionian teacher"). After returning he settled in Crotona, in Magna Grecia, where he established a college to which very soon resorted all the best intellects of the civilised centres. His father was one Mnesarchus of Samos, and was a man of noble birth and learning. It was Pythagoras. who was the first to teach the heliocentric system, and who was the greatest proficient in geometry of his century. It was he also who created the word "philosopher", composed of two words meaning a "lover of wisdom"—*philo-sophos*. As the greatest mathematician, geometer and astronomer of historical antiquity, and also the highest of the metaphysicians and scholars, Pythagoras has won imperishable fame. He taught reincarnation as it is professed in India and much else of the Secret Wisdom.

Q

Qadmon, Adam, or *Adam Kadmon (Heb.*). The Heavenly or Celestial Man, the Microcosm *(q.v.)*, He is the manifested *Logos*; the *third Logos* according to Occultism, or the Paradigm of Humanity.

R

Râga (Sk). One of the five *Kleshas* (afflictions) in Patânjali's *Yoga* philosophy. In *Sânkhya Kârikâ*, it is the "obstruction" called love and desire in the physical or terrestrial sense. The five *Kleshas* are: *Avidyâ*, or ignorance; *Asmitâ*, selfishness, or "I-am-ness" ; *Râga*, love; *Dwesha*, hatred; and *Abhinivesa,* dread of suffering.

Râjas (*Sk.*). The "quality of foulness" (*i.e.*, differentiation), and activity in the *Purânas.* One of the three *Gunas* or divisions in the correlations of matter and nature, representing form and change.

***Rajas*âs** (*Sk.*). The elder *Agnishwattas* – the Fire-Pitris, "fire" standing as a symbol of enlightenment and intellect.

Râkshasas (*Sk.*). *Lit*., "raw eaters", and in the popular superstition evil spirits, demons. Esoterically, however, they are the *Gibborim* (giants) of the Bible, the Fourth Race or the Atlanteans. (See *Secret Doctrine*, II., 165.)

Ratnâvabhâsa Kalpa (*Sk.*). The age in which all sexual difference will have ceased to exist, and birth will take place in the *Anupâdaka* mode, as in the second and third Root-races. Esoteric philosophy teaches that it will take place at the end of the sixth and during the seventh and last Root-race in this Round.

Reincarnation. The doctrine of rebirth, believed in by Jesus and the Apostles, as by all men in those days, but denied now by the Christians. All the Egyptian converts to Christianity, Church Fathers and others, believed in this doctrine, as shown by the writings of several. In the still existing symbols, the human-headed bird flying towards a mummy, a body, or "the soul uniting itself with its *sahou* (glorified body of the Ego, and also the *kâmalokic shell*) proves this belief. "The song of the Resurrection" chanted by Isis to recall her dead husband to life, might be translated "Song of Rebirth", as Osiris is collective Humanity. "Oh! Osiris [here follows the name of the Osirified mummy, or the departed], rise again in holy earth (matter), august mummy in the coffin, under thy corporeal substances", was the funeral prayer of the priest over the deceased. "Resurrection" with the Egyptians never meant the resurrection of the mutilated mummy, but of the *Soul* that informed it, the Ego in a new body. The putting on of flesh periodically by the Soul or the Ego, was a universal belief; nor can anything be more consonant with justice and Karmic law.

Rishi Prajâpati (*Sk.*). *Lit.*, "revealers", holy sages in the religious history of Âryavarta. Esoterically the highest of them are the Hierarchies of "Builders" and Architects of the Universe and of living things on earth; they are generally called Dhyan Chohans, Devas and gods.

Rishis (*Sk.*). Adepts; the inspired ones. In Vedic literature the term is employed to denote those persons through whom the various Mantras were revealed.

Rudras (*Sk.*). The mighty ones; the lords of the three upper worlds. One of the classes of the "fallen" or incarnating spirits; they are all born of Brahmâ.

Rûpa (*Sk.*). Body; any form, applied even to the forms of the gods, which are subjective to us.

S

Sabda Brahmam (*Sk.*). "The Unmanifested *Logos*." The *Vedas*; "Ethereal Vibrations diffused throughout Space ".

Sacred Science. The name given to the *inner* esoteric philosophy, the secrets taught in days of old to the initiated candidates, and divulged during the last and supreme Initiation by the Hierophants.

Sakti (*Sk.*). The active female energy of the gods; in popular Hinduism, their wives and goddesses; in Occultism, the crown of the astral light. Force and the six forces of nature synthesized. Universal Energy.

Sama (*Sk.*). One of the *bhâva pushpas,* or "flowers of sanctity Sama is the fifth, or "resignation". There are eight such flowers, namely: clemency or charity, self-restraint, affection (or love for others), patience, resignation, devotion, meditation and veracity. Sama is also the repression of any mental perturbation,

Sâma Veda (Sk.). Lit., "the Scripture, or *Shâstra,* of peace". One of the four *Vedas*.

Samâdhâna (Sk.). That state in which a Yogi can no longer diverge from the path of spiritual progress; when everything terrestrial, except the visible body, has ceased to exist for him.

Samâdhi (*Sk.*). A state of ecstatic and complete trance. The term comes from the words *Sam-âdha*, "self-possession ". He who possesses this power is able to exercise an absolute control over all his faculties, physical or mental; it is the highest state of *Yoga*.

Samâdhindriya (*Sk.*). Lit., "the root of concentration"; the fourth of the five roots called Pancha Indriyâni, which are said in esoteric philosophy to be the agents in producing a highly moral life, leading to sanctity and liberation ; when these are reached, the two *spiritual roots* lying latent in the body (Atmâ and *Buddhi*) will send out shoots and blossom. *Samâdhindriya* is the organ of ecstatic meditation in Râj-*yoga* practices.

Samâpatti *(Sk.*). Absolute concentration in Râja-*Yoga;* the process of development by which perfect indifference (*Sams*) is reached (*apatti*). This state is the last stage of development before the possibility of entering into Samâdhi is reached.

Samskâra *(Sk.*). Lit., from *Sam* and *Krî*, to improve, refine, impress. In Hindu philosophy the term is used to denote the impressions left upon the mind by individual actions or external circumstances, and capable of

being developed on any future favourable occasion—even in a future birth. The *Samskâra* denotes, therefore, the germs of propensities and impulses from previous births to be developed in this, or the coming *janmâs* or reincarnations. In Tibet, Samskâra is called Doodyed, and in China is defined as, or at least connected with, action or Karma. It is, strictly speaking, a metaphysical term, which in exoteric philosophies is variously defined; *e.g.*, in Nepaul as illusion, in Tibet as notion, and in Ceylon as discrimination. The true meaning is as given above, and as such is connected with Karma and its working.

Samvriti (*Sk.*). False conception—the origin of illusion.

Samvritisatya (*Sk.*). Truth mixed with false conceptions (Samvriti); the reverse of absolute truth – or *Paramârthasatya,* self-consciousness in absolute truth or reality.

Sanat Kumâra (*Sk.*). The most prominent of the seven Kumâras, the Vaidhâtra the first of which are called Sanaka, Sananda, Sanâtana and Sanat Kumâra; which names are all significant qualifications of the degrees of human intellect.

Sânkhya (*Sk.*). The system of philosophy founded by Kapila Rishi, a system of analytical metaphysics, and one of the six *Darshanas* or schools of philosophy. It discourses on numerical categories and the meaning of the twenty-five *tatwas* (the forces of nature in various degrees). This "atomistic school", as some call it, explains nature by the interaction of twenty-four elements with *Purusha* (spirit) modified by the three *gunas* (qualities), teaching the eternity of *pradhâna* (primordial, homogeneous matter), or the self-transformation of nature and the eternity of the human Egos.

Sânkhya *Yoga* (*Sk.*). The system of *Yoga* as set forth by the above school.

Sanskrit (*Sk.*). The classical language of the Brahmans, never known *nor spoken in its true systematized form* (given later *approximately* by Pânini), except by the initiated Brahmans, as it was pre-eminently "a mystery language". It has now degenerated into the so-called Prâkrita.

Saptarshi (*Sk.*). The seven Rishis. As stars they are the constellation of 'the Great Bear, and called as such the *Riksha* and *Chitrasikhandinas,* bright-crested.

Satya Yuga (*Sk.*). The golden age, or the age of truth and purity; the first of the four Yugas, also called Krita Yuga.

Sattva (*Sk.*). Understanding; quiescence in divine knowledge. It follows 'generally the word *Bodhi* when used as a compound word, e.g., "Bodhi*sattva*".

Sattva or Satwa, (*Sk.*). Goodness; the same as Sattva, or purity, one of the trigunas or three divisions of nature.

Satya (*Sk.*). Supreme truth.

Satya Loka (*Sk.*). The world of infinite purity and wisdom, the celestial abode of Brahmâ and the gods.

Satya Yuga (*Sk.*). The golden age, or the age of truth and purity; the first of the four Yugas, also called Krita Yuga.

Secret Doctrine. The general name given to the esoteric teachings of antiquity.

Sephira (*Heb.*) An emanation of Deity; the parent and synthesis of the ten Sephiroth when she stands at the head of the Sephirothal Tree; in the *Kabbalah,* Sephira,or the "Sacred Aged ", is the divine Intelligence (the same as Sophia or Metis), the first emanation from the "Endless" or Ain-Suph.

Sephiroth (*Heb.*). The ten emanations of Deity; the highest is formed by the concentration of the Ain Soph Aur, or the Limitless Light, and each: Sephira produces by emanation another Sephira. The names of the Ten Sephiroth are – 1. Kether – The Crown; 2. Chokmah – Wisdom; 3. Binah – Understanding; 4. Chesed – Mercy; Geburah – Power; 6. Tiphereth – Beauty; 7. Netzach – Victory; 8. Hod – Splendour; 9. Jesod_Foundation; and 10. Malkuth – The Kingdom.

The conception of Deity embodied in the Ten Sephiroth is a very sublime one, and each Sephira is a picture to the Kabbalist of a group of exalted ideas, titles and attributes, which the name but faintly represents. Each Sephira is called either active or passive, though this attribution may lead to error; passive does not mean a return to negative existence; and the two words only express the relation between individual Sephiroth, and not any absolute quality. [w.w.w.]

Sharîra (Sarîra) (*Sk.*). Envelope or body.

Siddhas (*Sk.*). Saints and sages who have become almost divine also a hierarchy of Dhyan Chohans.

Siddhâsana *(Sk.*). A posture in Hatha-*yoga* practices.

Siddha-Sena (*Sk.*). Lit., "the leader of Siddhas"; a title of Kârttikeya, the

"mysterious youth" *(kumâra guha*).

Siddhis *(Sk.*). Lit., "attributes of perfection"; phenomenal powers acquired through holiness by *Yogis*.

Sishta (*Sk.*). The great elect or Sages, left after every minor *Pralaya* (that which is called "obscuration" in Mr. Sinnett's *Esoteric Buddhism*), when the globe goes into its night or rest, to become, on its re-awakening, the seed of the next humanity. Lit. "remnant."

Siva (*Sk.*). The third person of the Hindu Trinity (the Trimûrti). He is a god of the first order, and in his character of Destroyer higher than Vishnu, the Preserver, as he destroys only to regenerate on a higher plane. He is born as Rudra, the Kumâra, and is the patron of all the *Yogis*, being called, as such, Mahâdeva the great ascetic, His titles are significant *Trilochana*, "the three-eyed", *Mahâdeva*, "the great god ", *Sankara*, etc., etc., etc.

Skandha or *Skhanda* (*Sk.*). Lit., "bundles", or groups of attributes; everything finite, inapplicable to the eternal and the absolute. There are five—esoterically, *seven*—attributes in every human living being, which are known as the *Pancha Shandhas*. These are (1) form, *rûpa;* (2) perception, *vidâna*; (3) consciousness, *sanjnâ*; (4) action, *sanskâra*; (5) knowledge, vidyâna. These unite at the birth of man and constitute his personality. After the maturity of these Skandhas, they begin to separate and weaken, and this is followed by *jarâmarana*, or decrepitude and death.

Son-kha-pa (*Tib.*). Written also *Tsong-kha-pa.* A famous Tibetan reformer of the fourteenth century, who introduced a purified *Buddhi*sm into his country. He was a great Adept, who being unable to witness any longer the desecration of Buddhist philosophy by the false priests who made of it a marketable commodity, put a forcible stop thereto by a timely revolution and the exile of 40,000 sham monks and Lamas from the country. He is regarded as an *Avatar* of Buddha, and is the founder of the *Gelukpa* (" yellow-cap ") Sect, and of the mystic Brotherhood connected with its chiefs. The "tree of the 10,000 images" *(khoom boom*) has, it is said, sprung from the long hair of this ascetic, who leaving it behind him disappeared for ever from the view of the profane.

Soul. The **yuch**, or *nephesh* of the *Bible*; the vital principle, or the breath of life, which every animal, down to the infusoria, shares with man. In the translated Bible it stands indifferently for *life*, blood and soul. "Let us not

kill his *nephesh* ", says the original text: "let us not kill *him* ", translate the Christians (*Genesis* xxxvii. 21), and so on.

Sparsa (*Sk*). The sense of touch.

Spirit. The lack of any mutual agreement between writers in the use of this word has resulted in dire confusion. It is commonly made synonymous with *soul*; and the lexicographers countenance the usage. In Theosophical teachings. the term "Spirit" is applied solely to that which *belongs directly to Universal Consciousness*, and which is its homogeneous and unadulterated emanation. Thus, the higher Mind in Man or his Ego (*Manas*) is, when linked indissolubly with *Buddhi*, a spirit; while the term "Soul", human or even animal (the lower *Manas* acting in animals as instinct), is applied only to Kâma-*Manas*, and qualified as the living soul. This is *nephesh*, in Hebrew, the "breath of life". Spirit is formless and *immaterial*, being, when individualised, of the highest spiritual substance – *Suddasatwa*, the divine essence, of which the body of the manifesting *highest* Dhyanis are formed. Therefore, the Theosophists reject the appellation "Spirits" for those phantoms which appear in the phenomenal manifestations of the Spiritualists, and call them "shells", and various other names. (See "Sukshma Sarîra".) Spirit, in short, is no entity in the sense of having form ; for, as Buddhist philosophy has it, where there is a form, there is a cause for pain and suffering. But each *individual* spirit – this individuality lasting only throughout the manvantaric life-cycle – may be described as a *centre of consciousness*, a self-sentient and self-conscious centre; a state, not a conditioned individual. This is why there is such a wealth of words in Sanskrit to express the different States of Being, Beings and Entities, each appellation showing the philosophical difference, the plane to which such *unit* belongs, and the degree of its spirituality or materiality. Unfortunately these terms are almost untranslatable into our Western tongues.

Sraddha (*Sk*). Lit., faith, respect, reverence.

Sri Sankarâchârya (*Sk*.). The great religious reformer of India, and teacher of the Vedânta philosophy—the greatest of all such teachers, regarded by the *Adwaitas* (Non-dualists) as an incarnation of Siva and a worker of miracles. He established many *mathams* (monasteries), and founded the most learned sect among Brahmans, called the Smârtava. The legends about him are as numerous as his philosophical writings. At the age of thirty-two he went to Kashmir, and reaching Kedâranâth in the

Himalayas, entered a cave alone, whence he never returned. His followers claim that he did not die, but only retired from the world.

Sthûla Sarîram (*Sk.*). In metaphysics, the gross physical body.

Sthûlopadhi (*Sk.*). A "principle" answering to the lower triad in man, i.e., body, astral form, and life, in the Târaka Râja *Yoga* system, which names only three chief principles in man. *Sthûlopadhi* corresponds to the *jagrata,* or waking conscious *state*.

Sûkshma Sarîra (*Sk.*). The dream-like, illusive body akin to *Mânasarûpa* or "thought-body ". It is the vesture of the gods, or the Dhyânis and the Devas. Written also *Sukshama Sharîra* and called *Sukshmopadhi* by the Târaka Râja *Yogis*. (*Secret Doctrine*, I.,157)

Sûkshmopadhi (*Sk.*). In Târaka Râja *Yoga* the "principle" containing both the higher and the lower *Manas* and Kâma. It corresponds to the *Manomaya Kosha* of the Vedantic classification and to the *Svapna* state. (See "Svapna ".)

Suras (*Sk.*). A general term for gods, the same as *devas*; the contrary to asuras or "no-gods".

Sûryâvarta (*Sk.*). A degree or stage of Samâdhi.

Sushupti Avasthâ (*Sk.*). Deep sleep; one of the four aspects of Prânava.

Sûtrâtman (*Sk.*). Lit., "the thread of spirit"; the immortal Ego, the Individuality which incarnates in men one life after the other, and upon which are strung, like beads on a string, his countless Personalities. The universal life-supporting air, *Samashti prau*; universal energy.

Svabhâvat (*Sk.*). Explained by the Orientalists as "plastic substance", which is an inadequate definition. Svabhâvat is the world-substance and stuff, or rather that which is behind it – the spirit and essence of substance. The name comes from *Subhâva* and is composed of three words – **su**, good, perfect, fair, handsome; **sva,** self; and **bkâva**, being, or *state of being.* From it all nature proceeds and into it all returns at the end of the life-cycles. In Esotericism it is called "Father-Mother". It is the plastic essence of matter.

Svapna Avasthâ (Sk.). A dreaming state; one of the four aspects of *Prânava*; a *Yoga* practice.

Svasam Vedanâ (*Sk.*). Lit., "the reflection which analyses itself "; a synonym of Paramârtha.

Svastikâsana (*Sk.*). The second of the four principal postures of the eighty-four prescribed in Hatha *Yoga* practices.

T

Taijasi (*Sk.*). The radiant, flaming—from *Tejas* "fire"; used sometimes to designate the *Mânasa-rûpa*, the "thought-body", and also the stars.

Tamas (*Sk.*). The quality of darkness, "foulness" and inertia; also of ignorance, as matter is blind. A term used in metaphysical philosophy. It is the lowest of the three *gunas* or fundamental qualities.

Tanha (*Pali*). The thirst for life. Desire to live and clinging to life on this earth. This clinging is that which causes rebirth or reincarnation.

Tanmâtras (*Sk.*). The types or rudiments of the five Elements; the subtile essence of these, devoid of all qualities and identical with the properties of the five basic Elements – earth, water, fire, air and ether; i.e., the *tanmâtras* are, in one of their aspects, smell, taste, touch, sight, and hearing.

Tapas (*Sk.*). "Abstraction", "meditation". "To perform *tapas*" is to sit for *contemplation*. Therefore ascetics are often called Tâpasas.

Târakâ Râja *Yoga* (*Sk.*). One of the Brahminical *Yoga* systems for the development of purely spiritual powers and knowledge which lead to Nirvâna.

Tattwa (*Sk.*). Eternally existing "That"; also, the different principles in Nature, in their occult meaning. *Tattwa Samâsa* is a work of Sânkhya philosophy attributed to Kapila himself.
Also the abstract principles of existence or categories, physical and metaphysical. The subtle elements—five exoterically, seven in esoteric philosophy——which are correlative to the five and the seven senses on the physical plane ; the last two senses are as yet latent in man, but will be developed in the two last root-races.

Theosophia (*Gr.*). Wisdom-religion, or "Divine Wisdom". The substratum and basis of all the world-religions and philosophies, taught and practised by a few elect ever since man became a thinking being. In its practical bearing, Theosophy is purely divine ethics; the definitions in dictionaries are pure nonsense, based on religious prejudice and ignorance of the true spirit of the early Rosicrucians and mediæval philosophers who called themselves Theosophists.

Theosophists. A name by which many mystics at various periods of history have called themselves. The Neo-Platonists of Alexandria were Theosophists; the Alchemists and Kabbalists during the mediæval ages were likewise so called, also the Martinists, the Quietists, and other kinds of mystics, whether acting independently or incorporated in a brotherhood or society. All real lovers of divine Wisdom and Truth had, and have, a right to the name, rather than those who, appropriating the qualification, live lives or perform actions opposed to the principles of Theosophy. As described by Brother Kenneth R. Mackenzie, the Theosophists of the past centuries – "entirely speculative, and founding no schools, have still exercised a silent influence upon philosophy; and, no doubt, when the time arrives, many ideas thus silently propounded may yet give new directions to human thought. One of the ways in which these doctrines have obtained not only authority, but power, has been among certain enthusiasts in the higher degrees of Masonry. This power has, however, to a great degree died with the founders, and modern Freemasonry contains few traces of theosophic influence. However accurate and beautiful some of the ideas of Swedenborg, Pernetty, Paschalis, Saint Martin, Marconis, Ragon, and Chastanier may have been, they have but little direct influence on society." This is true of the Theosophists of the last three centuries, but not of the later ones. For the Theosophists of the current century have already visibly impressed themselves on modern literature, and introduced the desire and craving for some philosophy in place of the blind dogmatic faith of yore, among the most intelligent portions of human-kind. Such is the difference between past and modern THEOSOPHY.

Thread Soul. The same as *Sutrâtmâ (q.v.)*.

Thumos (*Gr*.). The astral, animal soul; the *Kâmas-Manas; Thumos* means passion, desire and confusion and is so used by Homer. The word is probably derived from the Sanskit *Tamas*, which has the same meaning.

To On (*Gr*.). The "Being", the "Ineffable All" of Plato. He" whom no person has seen except the Son".

Tretâ Yuga (*Sk*.). The second age of the world, a period of 1,296,000 years.

Triad, or *the Three*. The ten Sephiroth are contemplated as a group of three triads: Kether, Chochmah and Binah form the supernal triad; Chesed, Geburah and Tiphereth, the second; and Netzach, Hod and Yesod, the

inferior triad. The tenth Sephira, Malkuth, is beyond the three triads. [w.w.w.]

The above is orthodox Western Kabalah. Eastern Occultists recognise but one triad – – the upper one (corresponding to Atmâ-*Buddhi* and the "Envelope" which reflects their light, the three in one) – and count seven lower Sephiroth, everyone of which stands for a "principle", beginning with the Higher *Manas* and ending with the Physical Body – of which Malkuth is the representative in the Microcosm and the Earth in the Macrocosm.

Tri*gunas* (*Sk.*). The three divisions of the inherent qualities of differentiated matter—i.e., of pure quiescence (*satva*), of activity and desire (*rajas*), of stagnation and decay (*tamas*) They correspond with Vishnu, Brahmâ, and Shiva. (See "Trimûrti".)

U

Upâdhi (*Sk.*). Basis; the vehicle, carrier or bearer of something less material than itself: as the human body is the *upâdhi* of its spirit, ether the *upâdhi* of light, etc., etc.; a mould; a defining or limiting substance.

Upanishad (*Sk.*). Translated as "esoteric doctrine ", or interpretation of the *Vedas* by the *Vedânta* methods. The third division of the *Vedas* appended to the *Brâhmanas* and regarded as a portion of *Sruti* or "revealed" word. They are, however, as records, far older than the *Brâhmanas* the exception of the two, still extant, attached to the *Rig -Veda* of the Aitareyins. The term *Upanishad* is explained by the Hindu pundits as "that which destroys ignorance, and thus produces liberation" of the spirit, through the knowledge of the supreme though *hidden* truth; the same, therefore, as that which was hinted at by Jesus, when he is made to say, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free "(*John* viii. 32). It is from these treatises of the *Upanishads*—themselves the echo of the primeval Wisdom-Religion – that the Vedânta system of philosophy has been developed. (See "Vedânta".) Yet old as the *Upanishads* may be, the Orientalists will not assign to the oldest of them more than an antiquity of 600 years B.C. The accepted number of these treatises is 150, though now no more than about twenty are left unadulterated. They treat of very abstruse, metaphysical questions, such as the origin of the Universe; the nature and the essence of the Unmanifested Deity and the manifested gods the connection, primal and ultimate, of spirit and matter; the universality of mind and the nature of the human Soul and Ego.

The *Upanishads* must be far more ancient than the days of *Buddhi*sm, as they show no preference for, nor do they uphold, the superiority of the Brahmans as a caste. On the contrary, it is the (now) second caste, the Kshatriya, or warrior class, who are exalted in the oldest of them. As stated by Professor Cowell in Elphinstone's *History of India*——"they breathe a freedom of spirit unknown to any earlier work except the *Rig Veda*. . . The great teachers of the higher knowledge and Brahmans are continually represented as *going to Kshatriya Kings to become their pupils*." The "Kshatriya Kings" were in the olden times, like the King Hierophants of Egypt, the receptacles of the highest divine knowledge and wisdom, the *Elect* and the incarnations of the primordial divine Instructors—the Dhyâni Buddhas or Kumâras. There was a time, æons before the Brahmans became a caste, or even the *Upanishads* were written, when there was on earth but one "lip ", one religion and one science, namely, the speech of the gods, the Wisdom-Religion and Truth. This was before the fair fields of the latter, overrun by nations of many languages, became overgrown with the weeds of intentional deception, and national creeds invented by ambition, cruelty and selfishness, broke the one sacred Truth into thousands of fragments.

Uparati (*Sk*) Absence of outgoing desires; a *Yoga* state.

V

Vâch (Sk.). To call Vâch "speech" simply, is deficient in clearness. Vâch is the mystic personification of speech, and the female *Logos,* being one with Brahmâ, who created her out of one-half of his body, which he divided into two portions; she is also one with Virâj (called the "female" Virâj) who was created in her by Brahmâ. In one sense Vâch is "speech" by which knowledge was taught to man; in another she is the "mystic, secret speech" which descends upon and enters into the primeval Rishis, as the "tongues of fire" are said to have "sat upon" the apostles. For, she is called "the female creator ", the "mother of the *Vedas* ", etc., etc. Esoterically, she is the subjective Creative Force which, emanating from the Creative Deity (the subjective Universe, its "privation ", or *ideation*) becomes the manifested "world of speech ", i.e., the *concrete expression of ideation*, hence the "Word" or *Logos*. Vâch is "the male and female" Adam of the first chapter of *Genesis*, and thus called "Vâch-Virâj" by the sages. (See *Atharva Veda*.) She is also "the celestial Saraswatî produced from the heavens ", a "voice derived from *speechless* Brahmâ" *(Mahâbhârata)*; the goddess of wisdom and eloquence. She is called *Sata-rûpa,* the goddess of *a hundred forms.*

Vâhan(a) (*Sk.*). A vehicle, the carrier of something immaterial and formless. All the gods and goddesses are, therefore, represented as using vâhanas to manifest themselves, which vehicles are ever symbolical. So, for instance, Vishnu has during Pra*laya*s, *Ânanta* the infinite" (Space), symbolized by the serpent Sesha, and during the Manvantaras – *Garuda* the gigantic half-eagle, half-man, the symbol of the great cycle; Brahma appears as Brahmâ, descending into the planes of manifestations on *Kâlahamsa*, the "swan in time or finite eternity"; Siva (phonet, Shiva) appears as the bull *Nandi*; Osiris as the sacred bull *Apis*; Indra travels on an elephant; Kârttikeya, on a peacock; Kâmadeva on *Makâra*, at other times a parrot; Agni, the universal (and also solar) Fire-god, who is, as all of them are, "a consuming Fire", manifests itself as a ram and a lamb, *Ajâ*, "the unborn"; Varuna, as a fish; etc., etc., while the vehicle of MAN is his body.

Vaikhari Vâch (*Sk.*). 'That which is uttered; one of the four forms of speech.

Vaisheshika (Sk.). One of the six *Darshanas* or schools of philosophy, founded by Kanâda. It is called the Atomistic School, as it teaches the existence of a universe of atoms of a transient character, an endless number of souls and a fixed number of material principles, by the correlation and interaction of which periodical cosmic evolutions take place without any directing Force, save a kind of mechanical law inherent in the atoms; a very materialistic school.

Vaishnava (*Sk.*). A follower of any sect recognising and worshipping Vishnu as the one supreme God. The worshippers of Siva are called *Saivas*.

Vaivaswata (*Sk.*). The name of the Seventh Manu, the forefather of the post-diluvian race, or our own fifth humankind. A reputed son of Sûrya (the Sun), he became, after having been saved in an ark (built by the order of Vishnu) from the Deluge, the father of Ikshwâku, the founder of the solar race of kings. (See "*Sûryavansa*".)

Vâyu (*Sk.*). Air: the god and sovereign of the air; one of the five states of matter, namely the *gaseous*; one of the five elements, called, as wind, *Vâta*. The *Vishnu Purâna* makes Vâyu King of the Gandharvas. He is the father of Hanumân, in the *Râmâyana.* The trinity of the mystic gods in Kosmos closely related to each other, are "Agni (fire) whose place is on earth; Vâyu (air, or one of the forms of Indra), whose place is in the air ; and Sûrya (the sun) whose place is in the air (*Nirukta*.) In esoteric interpretation, these

three cosmic principles, correspond with the three human principles, Kâma, Kâma-*Manas* and *Manas*, the sun of the intellect.

Vedânta (*Sk.*). A mystic system of philosophy which has developed from the efforts of generations of sages to interpret the secret meaning of the *Upanishads (q.v.)*. It is called in the *Shad-Darshanas* (six schools or systems of demonstration), *Uttara Mîmânsâ*, attributed to *Vyâsa*, the compiler of the *Vedas*, who is thus referred to as the founder of the Vedânta. The orthodox Hindus call Vedânta_a term meaning literally the "end of all (Vedic) knowledge "– *Brahmâ-jnâna*, or pure and spiritual knowledge of Brahmâ. Even if we accept the late dates assigned to various Sanskrit schools and treatises by our Orientalists, the Vedânta must be 3,300 years old, as Vyâsa is said to have lived I,400 years B.C. If, as Elphinstone has it in his *History of India*, the *Brahmanas* are the *Talmud* of the Hindus, and the *Vedas* the Mosaic books, then the *Vedânta* may be correctly called the *Kabalah* of India. But how vastly more grand! Sankarâchârya, who was the popularizer of the Vedântic system, and the founder of the *Adwaita* philosophy, is sometimes called the founder of the modern schools of the Vedânta.

Vedas (*Sk.*). The "revelation". the scriptures of the Hindus, from the root *vid*, "to know ", or "divine knowledge". They are the most ancient as well as the most sacred of the Sanskrit works. The *Vedas*, on the date and antiquity of which no two Orientalists can agree, are claimed by the Hindus themselves, whose Brahmans and Pundits ought to know best about their own religious works, to have been first taught orally for thousands of years and then compiled on the shores of Lake Mânasa-Sarovara (phonetically, *Mansarovara*) beyond the Himalayas, in Tibet.

The Vedic writings are all classified in two great divisions, exoteric and esoteric, the former being called *Karma-Kânda,* "division of actions or works ", and the *Jnâna Kânda*, "division of (divine) knowledge", the *Upanishads* (q.v.) coming under this last classification. Both departments are regarded as *Sruti* or revelation. To each hymn of the *Rig -Veda*, the name of the Seer or Rishi to whom it was revealed is prefixed. It, thus, becomes evident on the authority of these very names (such as Vasishta, Viswâmitra, Nârada, etc.), all of which belong to men born in various manvantaras and even ages, that centuries, and perhaps millenniums, must have elapsed between the dates of their composition.

Vidyâ (*Sk.*). Knowledge, Occult Science.

Vijnânam (*Sk.*). The Vedântic name for the principle which dwells in the *Vijnânamaya Kosha* (the sheath of intellect) and corresponds to the faculties of the Higher *Manas*.

Vishnu (*Sk.*). The second person of the Hindu Trimûrti (trinity), composed of Brahmâ, Vishnu and Siva. From the root **vish**, "to pervade". in the *Rig - Veda*, Vishnu is no high god, but simply a manifestation of the solar energy, described as "striding through the seven regions of the Universe in *three* steps and enveloping all things with the dust (of his beams ".) Whatever may be the six other occult significances of the statement, this is related to the same class of types as the seven and ten Sephiroth, as the *seven* and *three* orifices of the perfect Adam Kadmon, as the seven "principles" and the higher triad in man, etc., etc. Later on this mystic type becomes a great god, the preserver and the renovator, he "of a thousand names – Sahasranâma ".

W

Will. In metaphysics and occult philosophy, Will is that which governs the manifested universes in eternity. *Will* is the one and sole principle of abstract eternal MOTION, or its ensouling essence. "The will", says Van Helmont, "is the first of all powers. . . . The will is the property of all spiritual beings and displays itself in them the more actively the more they are freed from matter." And Paracelsus teaches that "determined will is the beginning of all magical operations. It is because men do not perfectly imagine and believe the result, that the (occult) arts are so uncertain, while they might he perfectly certain." Like all the rest, the Will is *septenary* in its degrees of manifestation. Emanating from the one, eternal, abstract and purely quiescent Will (Âtmâ in Layam), it becomes *Buddhi* in its A*laya* state, descends lower as Mahat (*Manas*), and runs down the ladder of degrees until the divine Eros becomes, in its lower, animal manifestation, erotic desire. Will as an eternal principle is neither spirit nor substance but everlasting ideation. As well expressed by Schopenhauer in his *Parerga*, "in sober reality there is neither *matter* nor *spirit.* The tendency to gravitation in a stone is as unexplainable as thought in the human brain. . . If matter can – no one knows why – fall to the ground, then it can also – no one knows why – think. . . . As soon, even in mechanics, as we trespass beyond the purely mathematical, as soon as we reach the inscrutable adhesion, gravitation, and so on, we are faced by phenomena which are to our senses as mysterious as the WILL."

Wisdom. The "very essence of wisdom is contained in the Non-Being ". say the Kabbalists; but they also apply the term to the WORD or *Logos*, the Demiurge, by which the universe was called into existence. "The one Wisdom is in the Sound ", say the Occultists; the *Logos* again being meant by Sound, which is the substratum of Âkâsa. Says the *Zohar,* the "Book of Splendour" "It is the Principle of all the Principles, the mysterious Wisdom, the crown of all that which there is of the most High". (*Zohar*, iii., fol. 288, Myers *Qabbalah*.) And it is explained, "Above Kether is the Ayin, or Ens, i.e., Ain, the NOTHING". "It is so named because we do not know, and it is impossible to know, *that which there is in that Principle,* because . . . it is above Wisdom itself." (iii., fol. 288.) This shows that the real Kabbalists agree with the Occultists that the essence, or that which is in the principle of Wisdom, is still above that highest Wisdom.

Wisdom Religion. The one religion which underlies all the now-existing creeds. That "faith" which, being primordial, and revealed directly to human kind by their *progenitors* and informing EGOS (though the Church regards them as the "fallen angels"), required no "grace", nor *blind* faith to believe, for it was *knowledge*. (See "Gupta Vidyâ", Hidden Knowledge.) It is on this Wisdom Religion that *Theosophy is based.*

Y

Years of Brahmâ. The whole period of "Brahma's Age" (100 Years). Equals 31I,040,000,000,000 years. (See "Yuga ".)

Yoga (*Sk.*). (1) One of the six Darshanas or schools of India; a school of philosophy founded by Patanjali, though the real *Yoga* doctrine, the one that is said to have helped to prepare the world for the preaching of Buddha, is attributed with good reasons to the more ancient sage Yâjnawalkya, the writer of the *Shatapatha Brâhmana*, of *Yajur Veda*, the *Brihad Âranyaka*, and other famous works. (2) The practice of meditation as a means of leading to spiritual liberation. Psycho-spiritual powers are obtained thereby, and induced ecstatic states lead to the clear and correct perception of the eternal truths, in both the visible and invisible universe.

Yogâchârya (*Sk.*). (1) A mystic school. (2) Lit., a teacher (*âchârya*) of *Yoga*, one who has mastered the doctrines and practices of ecstatic meditation – the culmination of which are the *Mahâsiddhis.* It is incorrect to confuse this school with the Tantra, or Mahâtantra school founded by Samantabhadra, for there are two Yogâchârya Schools, one esoteric, the other popular. The

doctrines of the latter were compiled and glossed by Asamgha in the sixth century of our era, and his mystic tantras and mantras, his formularies, litanies, spells and mudrâ would certainly, if attempted without a Guru, serve rather purposes of sorcery and black magic than real *Yoga*. Those who undertake to write upon the subject are generally learned missionaries and haters of Eastern philosophy in general. From these no unbiassed views can be expected. Thus when we read in the *Sanskrit - Chinese Dictionary* of Eitel, that the reciting of mantras (which he calls "spells"!) "should he accompanied by music and distortions of the fingers (mudrâ), that a state of mental fixity (*Samâdhi*} might he reached ' – one acquainted, however slightly,. with the real practice of *Yoga* can only shrug his shoulders. These distortions of the fingers or, mudrâ are necessary, the author thinks, for the reaching of Samâdhi, "characterized by there being neither thought nor annihilation of thought, and consisting of six-fold bodily (*sic*) and mental happiness *(yogi) whence would result endowment with supernatural miracle-working power*". Theosophists cannot be too much warned against such fantastic and prejudiced explanations.

Yogi (*Sk.*). (1) Not "a state of six-fold bodily and mental happiness as the result, of ecstatic meditation" (Eitel) but a state which, when reached, makes the practitioner thereof absolute master of his six principles", *he now being merged in the seventh*. It gives him full control, owing to his knowledge of SELF and Self, over his bodily, intellectual and mental states, which, unable any longer to interfere with, or act upon, his Higher Ego, leave it free to exist in its original, pure, and divine state. (2) Also the name of the devotee who practises *Yoga*.

Yuga (*Sk.*). A 1,000th part of a *Kalpa*. An age of the World of which there are four, and the series of which proceed in succession during the manvantaric cycle. Each Yuga is preceded by a period called in the *Purânas Sandhyâ*, twilight, or transition period, and is followed by another period of like duration called *Sandhyânsa*, "portion of twilight". Each is equal to one-tenth of the Yuga. The group of four Yugas is first computed by the *divine* years, or "years of the gods" – each such year being equal to 360 years of mortal men. Thus we have, in "divine" years :

	AGE	YEARS
1	*Krita* or *Satya Yuga*	4,000
	Sandhyâ	400
	Sandhyansa	400
		4,800

2	*Tretâ Yuga*	3,000
	Sandhyâ	300
	Sandhyânsa	300
		3,600

3	*Dwâpara Yug*a	2,000
	Sandhya	200
	Sandhyânsa	200
		2,400

4	*Kali Yuga*	1,000
	Sandhyâ	100
	Sandhyânsa	100
		1,200
	Total =	**12,000**

This rendered in years of mortals equals:

4800	X	360	=	1,728,000
3600	X	360	=	1,296,000
2400	X	360	=	864,000
1200	X	360	=	432,000
		Total	=	**4,320,000**

The above is called a *Mahâyuga* or *Manvantara*. 2,000 such *Mahâyugas*, or a period of 8,640,000 years, make a Kalpa the latter being only a "day and a night", or twenty-four hours, of Brahmâ. Thus an "age of Brahmâ", or one hundred of his divine years, must equal 311,040,000,000,000 of our mortal years. The old Mazdeans or Magi (the modern Parsis) had the same calculation, though the Orientalists do not seem to perceive it, for even the Parsi Moheds themselves have forgotten it. But their "Sovereign time of the Long Period" (*Zervan Dareghâ Hvadâta*) lasts 12,000 years, and these are the 12,000 *divine* years of a Mahâyuga as shown above, whereas the *Zervan Akarana* (Limitless Time), mentioned by Zarathustra, is the *Kâla*, out of space and time, of Parabrahm.

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